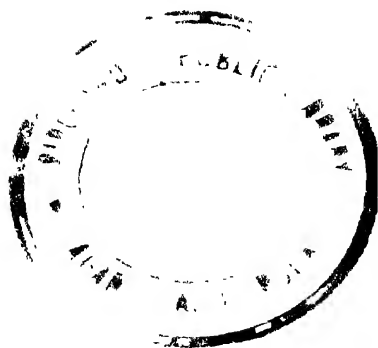


# SIX SANSKRIT PLAYS

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*In English Translation*

EDITED BY  
HENRY W. WELLS



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H. W. WELLS.



## CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION	ix
THE VISION OF VASAVADATTA attributed to Bhasa ; translated by A. C. Woolner and Lakshman Sarup	i
THE LITTLE CLAY CART attributed to Sudraka ; translated by Revilo Pendleton Oliver	43
SILAKUNTALA by Kalidasa , translated by A. Hjalmar Edgren	221
VIKRAMORVACIE, OR THE HERO AND THE NYMPH by Kalidasa ; translated by Sri Aurobindo	330
RAMA'S LATER HISTORY by Bhavabhuti , translated by C. N. Joshi	412
NAGANANDA by Harsha ; translated by Palmer Boyd	510

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A LITTLE CLAY CART

*Frontispiece*

*(Between pp. xvi-xvii)*

MODEL OF THE SANSKRIT THEATRE : EXTERIOR

MODEL OF THE SANSKRIT THEATRE : INTERIOR

PLAN OF A SANSKRIT THEATRE

LADY IN A STORM, HASTENING TO HER LOVER

GIRL WITH PET ANTELOPE

COUPLE EMBRACING

RAMA

HEAD OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA WITH HALO OF NAGA HEADS

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE climate of the world's thinking today naturally presents some areas more heavily charged with meaning than others. Fresh ties between the Western world and Asia accelerate as perhaps never before the desire of Westerners for a more understanding grasp of Asian thought. And among the Asian nations India is rightly one of those that attract the most notice.

Few countries are at present experiencing a more animated revival than is India. Similarly, our present crisis in the arts, most clearly visible in the sole meeting-place of all the arts, the theatre, stimulates a wish for better understanding of the principles of the stage, both at home and abroad, for home and abroad have everywhere come to stand in remarkably close contact. The late A. Berriedale Keith, probably the most erudite writer in English on the traditional theatre of India, remarks: "The Sanskrit drama may legitimately be regarded as the highest product of Indian poetry and as summing up in itself the final conception of literary art achieved by the very self-conscious Indian literature." It is also legitimate to say that potentially, at least, to Western eyes it constitutes the most attractive and revealing body of writing as yet to come from India; it is quite possibly the finest literary or poetic theatre outside the West, neither so remote from Western thought as to be all but inaccessible nor so much like Western thought as to be without stimulating suggestions. It is not only attractive in itself but builds a bridge between the theatre of Europe and that of the Far East, traversable with almost equal ease by Westerners whose thoughts move toward China and Japan and by Far Easterners whose view lies toward the West.

Since the foregoing statements are presumably true, why, it may be asked, is the major Indian drama still relatively little known and why, especially in the West, has it so often been misunderstood? The first answer to this question is simple. A line of continuity or inheritance has been broken. Even *Shakuntala*, best known of the old plays, is seldom seen in the theatres of the West and is almost invariably performed

with small possibilities of close approximation to its original presentation. It is an understatement to observe that in the course of the last ten centuries the Indian stage as a living art has lost much more of its early splendor than has been the case with the analogous drama in China and Japan. Social and political conditions in large part account for this. The country has been twice invaded and conquered, once by the Moslems and again by the Europeans. Historically speaking, drama has always been a distinctly social institution, even in its most advanced forms dependent to a pronounced degree on support from the reigning economic and political system. The Sanskrit drama, though by no means narrowly based, drew largely for its support from court life and religious establishments. Time betrayed these conditions favorable to sustaining the most powerful drama which India has as yet created. Accordingly, this is now seen almost exclusively through the lens of learning, which is to say, through a glass darkly. The actual stage of Mei Lan-fang and the chief Kabuki and Noh actors of today maintains at least strong reminiscences of long and illustrious theatrical traditions, to a degree indiscoverable on even the finest Indian stages.

There have been other obstacles as well. The most devoted Western studies in the civilization of ancient India have been in fields of philosophy and religion ; this has led inquirers directly to the speculative and theological works themselves instead of to the plays, despite the drama's embodiment of the leading conceptions in a manner often especially palatable to Western thinking. The content of the plays has stimulated no large body of serious criticism by the West. And by the East this content is blandly assumed. Similarly, from a number of causes the specifically aesthetic and theatrical aspects of the drama have also been slighted. Few theatre scholars of the West have seen performances ; translations have been comparatively infrequent, often sadly defective from the literary standpoint, and even relatively inaccessible. The language itself is not widely known. The important theoretical treatises, like the *Natyashastra*, have been singularly neglected by translators and superficially examined. Although the plays have occasionally been used as texts for learners of Sanskrit, linguistic study has too often been divorced from aesthetic or thea-

trical considerations. In the more general works on comparative literature the Indian drama has repeatedly been praised rather than closely examined and accorded in the end merely honorable discharge from the reader's attention.

All these unfavorable conditions notwithstanding, a distinctly brighter period now seems imminent. The happier conditions are not as yet signalized by any large number of new translations nor even by critical appreciations. It is above all the atmosphere which has changed, with its prospect of a renaissance indicated. With the accelerated exchange of students and travelers, it must be clear that one of the shortest routes to India is through her impressive achievement in drama. Stimulated also by the strong increase of interest in the theatre of the Far East, contemporary thought can hardly overlook the rich or even richer materials offered by India, while Kalidasa seems midway between Shakespeare and Chikamatsu. Experimental productions are occasionally given in the West, like the successful performance of *Shakuntala* in Holland,

Activity in India itself has turned to the stage, where several models of the ancient theatres have been made according to the descriptions in the *Natyasastra*. The enthusiasm also for the stylized theatre, the open stage without a concealing curtain, for poetic or metaphysical drama following the naturalism by Ibsen in the plays written in his mid-career, accounts for the greater part of this tendency. Strindberg's *Great Highway* is a highway also to India, and Indra by no means accidentally becomes a figure in his famous *Dream Play*. Although Bertolt Brecht turned, from political reasons, rather to China than to India, and Yeats in his intimate and not wholly satisfactory theatre favored Japan, it must be clear to all persons familiar with the Sanskrit stage that there rather than elsewhere in Asia at least the literary analogues to the modern imaginative drama are most readily found. The Indian plays wrestle with problems in the theatrical imagination broached by Strindberg, Brecht, Lorca, Pirandello, Sartre, Eliot and O'Neill. They also wrestle with spiritual problems raised by these dramatists and by all poets and authors of a metaphysical imagination, from William Blake to Rainer Maria Rilke and beyond.

What, specifically, is this important classical Indian drama? It is found, of course, so far as our own view goes, only in plays



that have survived as literature. Hints exist of a very early drama in India, how primitive or how sophisticated cannot be ascertained. The earliest complete plays are presumably those of Bhasa, to whom thirteen short works are plausibly ascribed and who may have flourished in the fourth century A.D. In general, it must be added, the dates of Sanskrit drama are indefinite. The terminus for the dynamic period is some five centuries after Bhasa. The most brilliant period lies in the four or five centuries immediately preceding the Islamic invasions. The drama thus reached its height in a period commonly regarded as one of the most brilliant in Indian culture, the strongest light shining here precisely in those centuries usually called dark by historians of Europe.

The evolution of Indian drama observes a pattern decidedly familiar to historians of civilization. Bhasa's plays are more theatrical than literary and possess more strength than elegance. Dramas of the later part of the period, by contrast, are decidedly decadent, though their language is at times stylistically much elaborated, as style in the silver age of Latin or of the late Hellenistic age. The literary drama stands at its full stature and maturity with Kalidasa and the legendary Sudraka, author of *The Little Clay Cart*, both flourishing approximately a century after Bhasa. The productive era extends to Bhavabhuti and Vicakhadatta, author of *Mudra-raksasa*.

In Bhasa the text, resembling a libretto, serves the lively action, which is primary. Later, in times of an obese linguistic decadence, the text resembles not only a libretto for a lavish spectacle but an incantation too closely approaching music, with extraordinary stylistic elaborations and affectations. The rare fusion of action and spectacle, poetry and drama, thought and excitement, spirituality and entertainment, reaches its Sophoclean ripeness in Kalidasa. Bhavabhuti's strong genius seems to have combated the tendency to decay. Harsha—if the plays commonly ascribed to him are his—was clearly a poet of lesser stature, though still impressive. In his dramas the fibers of poetry and the theatrical arts seem relatively relaxed and the enthusiasm to have declined. It is with one of his plays, accordingly, that the specimens chosen for this volume conclude. It should be added that many

types of drama less striking than that represented here have survived and that other types have been as completely lost as pantomime itself.

Indian critics recognize an extraordinary number of dramatic species. But it is reasonable to suppose that the best has come down to us. Sanskrit plays are epic, romantic, religious, political, social, serious, comic, farcical, musical, literary and choreographic and even at times all these in one. They range from the most elaborate spectacles to monologues and from dance-ritual to buffoonery. For present purposes, however, they are more or less of a kind, the chief distinction being between the five idealistic romances primarily based on romantic and epic material inspired by mythology and religion and the one great comedy in the Indian repertory, *The Little Clay Cart*. This long and complex play is in its contents so masterful and comprehensive that only parts of it were imitated and no second to it is known to exist. It invited repeated performance and discouraged emulation. Yet philosophically and aesthetically it by no means contradicts the dramas based on the ancient heroic or sentimental poetry. Its hero is a model of piety. Although exchanging an ideal scene or one in lavishly painted nature for the manners of a large city, this urban and urbane work remains also idealistic, romantic and thoroughly orthodox in thought and technique. Even the weather frequently invades the city, as in the remarkable act entitled "The Storm."

Biographically considered, Sanskrit drama presents a riddle and a labyrinth. Dates, ascriptions, locale are as a rule uncertain; the movement rises in a mist and dissolves into a fog. Occasionally as an academic exercise Sanskrit plays are known to have been written even in the present century, but the main stream was lost in European chronology before the close of the Middle Ages. The precise number of extant plays cannot be given if only for the reason that no precise limit can be set to a movement that died, though no one can say exactly when. From the two great classical periods of drama there have survived considerably more Sanskrit plays than Greek and a far larger number of Sanskrit playwrights. Yet no playwright is represented as satisfactorily as the four great Athenians.

Bhasa is, as we have seen, known conjecturally for thirteen short works. Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, and Harsha, three major dramatists, are commonly assigned only three plays each. With the exception of Bhasa, no dramatist is known for any considerable number of works, and in most instances the playwright survives in only a single specimen. Hence the sum of the plays does not greatly exceed the number of names surviving. Clearly, lovers of literary biography are placed at a serious loss. We know Shakespeare far better than Kalidasa. Little or nothing is known of most of the men themselves and in no case can it be confidently stated that we possess anything like a fair picture of a man's work or the full scope of his abilities. One does much better to think of individual plays than to speculate on the literary personalities of their authors.

As already stated, the Indian drama stands midway between that of Europe and the Far East. Were one to judge by *The Little Clay Cart*, one would be tempted to think it considerably nearer to Europe than to China or Japan, for that work might have been easily appreciated, could he have known it, by Menander or Ben Jonson. Yet were one to judge by Harsha's *Nagananda*, or "Snake Drama," one would be strongly inclined to think it closer to the Far East than to Europe. This ambivalence suggests also that when comparison is made between India and the West both similarities and dissimilarities are sharply defined.

It is, of course, clear that the plays depart in important respects from the Western stage. Their philosophy is the religious philosophy of the East; their mythology is Eastern and to some extent baffling to Western readers or audiences. Their sensibility is clearly Eastern, especially in its erotic features. They celebrate both fertility and the ideal of family life in a manner alien to most Western thought. On the one hand, the eroticism has seemed to some Westerners over-intense on the other hand, the specious and sentimental formula "and lived happily everafter" by no means applies to the Indian; works, for the Indians are not content in their stories to stop with courtship and are much more given than Westerners to dwell upon family life and to view the offspring as adult or at the least adolescent. The madonna figure is strikingly absent.

One explanation of the absence in India of the romantic

"happy everafter" formula is the great difference in the general conception of time in East and West, a difference made especially conspicuous in drama. Events on the Sanskrit stage may less truthfully be said to occur in time than in eternity. Indian drama does not deal in suspense or surprise in the same spirit as the Western stage. Its myths are known to the audience from beginning to end. And going even beyond this, which is a condition almost equally present, to be sure, in the Greek theatre, Indian playwrights invite the imagination to see a sequence of events as an even whole. A play is not as Aristotle requires, a single action. It presents a series of actions or even a cycle, as the cycle of the seasons, where there need be no absolute climax. There is more of contrast than of either climax or surprise. Characters repeatedly recall the past or foresee the future. Furthermore, the audience itself is invited to recall the past or provision the future in a manner ironically unlike that of the persons upon the stage. Dreams and visions confuse the sense of time.

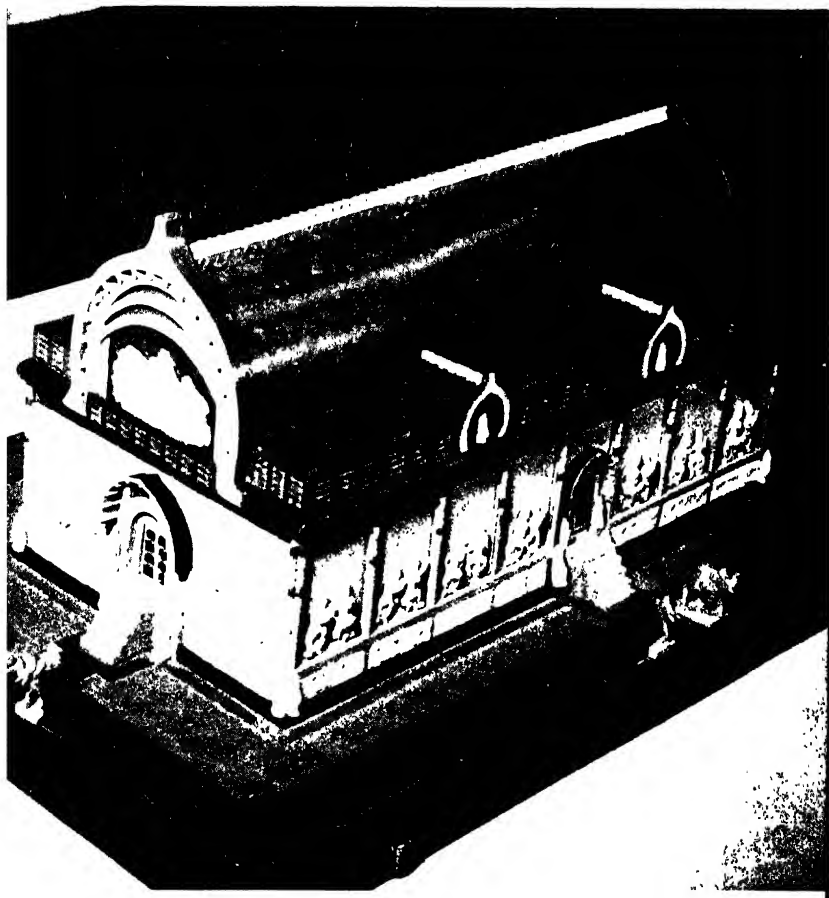
The first play in the present collection is entitled *The Vision of Vasavadatta*. Its hero stands in complete confusion as to past or present, illusion or reality. With artful variants the same theme is developed by all the chief dramatists. The hero steps out of the position which to Western thought constitutes the normal attitude toward both time and reality. Physical action on the stage occurs at a different time from mental action. The hero of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* at first loses all contact with the past and is later overwhelmed by this contact. Kalidasa's Pururavas cannot reconcile past with present. The hero of Bhavabhuti's *Rama's Later History* stands within the same dilemma. In one of the major scenes of this remarkable play two pairs of characters converse separately in two parts of the stage, each inhabiting a distinct sphere of time. The resolution of their dilemma is the dramatist's own superior vision.

In Shakespeare's *Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, and, still more conspicuously, *The Winter's Tale*, time is treated more nearly in the Indian manner than usual in Renaissance drama, yet Shakespeare's thinking by no means fully accords with that of the Indians. Whereas Shakespeare turns his eyes to past and future, to reminiscence or prophecy, as if turning his head from

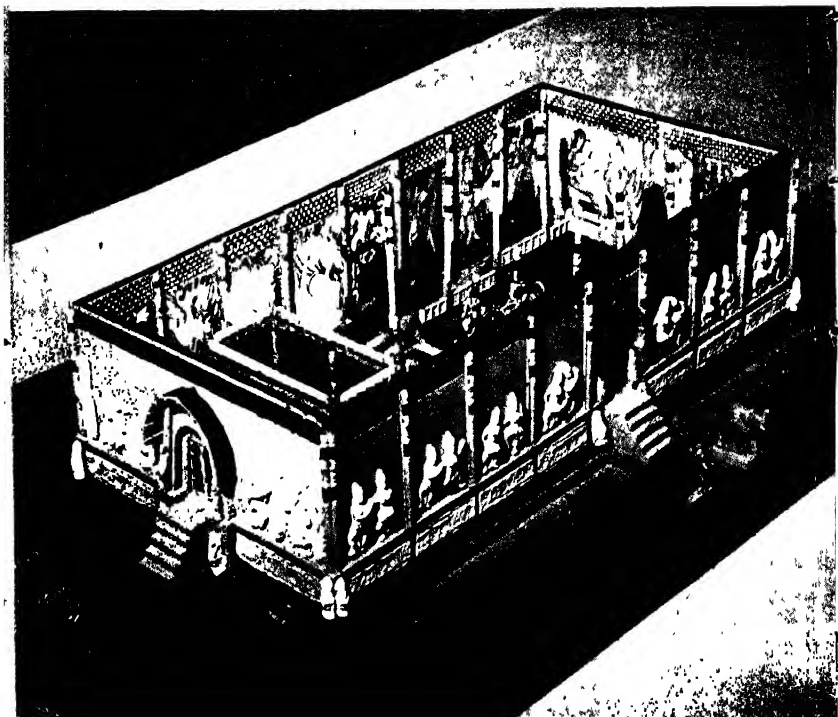
left to right, the Sanskrit dramatist possesses the third eye in the forehead, which sees comprehensively and does so habitually. For him, time lies in a sphere, not along a straight line.

Although jokes seem more subject to occasion and place than emotionally serious statements, comedy itself appears in its essential aspects less subject to these limitations than more serious or emotional drama. A tragic action or fall, is, according to Aristotle, the basis of tragedy, which exists to purge the mind by shock of its emotional perturbations. Such drama is pragmatic, a therapy for the soul. This is tragedy. The Indian drama may well be as serious as that of the West and is certainly as often bathed in pathos or tears, wrung from images of suffering and distress ; yet it demands a happy ending and remains comprehensively oblivious to the demands of Aristotle. To be sure, it also addresses the soul of the individual spectator and aims at his purification. Purgation seems not to have been mentioned. The main aim of Indian drama is more positive and less therapeutic : not merely the cure of the spectator's distress but his establishment in harmony not so much with himself as with the universe. The plays are thus in their inspiration musical and their music is regarded as essentially that of the spheres.

Over the Elizabethan stage hung a canopy depicting the signs of the zodiac, which, in Shakespeare's words, governed the conditions of his characters and led them often to madness. The Indian playhouse was more specifically a hall of healing and joy. The heroes and heroines are not, as sometimes hastily stated, faultless, but they are undeniably idealized. Each play begins and ends with prayer. That the first prayer is by convention treated somewhat cavalierly or humorously, does not vitiate its force but merely directs this force in such a channel that art and not religion in its purity occupies the foreground of the entertainment. This entertainment always retains a religious background and the religion itself prefers contemplation and repose to action and excitement. Western writers have often been so deeply committed to customary Western practices and to the doctrine of Aristotle that they have commiserated the poor Indians for a failure to achieve tragedy and the tragic tone. They might, perhaps, as profitably have considered whether the demands of either the stage or



MODEL OF THE SANSKRIT THEATRE - EXTERIOR. This represents a theatre in a princely court as it might have appeared at any time within the first Christian millennium. Made by Shanta Gandhi, in Bombay, from specifications in the *Natyasastra*, ascribed to Bharata. See p. xxviii.  
 (Photo by Fred Fehl.)

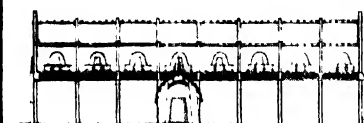


MODEL OF THE SANSKRIT THEATRE. INTERIOR. This represents (theatre is a purely comic as it might have appeared at any time within the last Christian millennium). Made by Shanti Gadhvi in Bombay from specifications in the *Natyashastra* ascribed to Bharata. The model is in The Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum, Columbia University, New York. See p. xxviii.

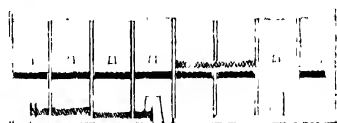
Photo by Fred Uchly

## RECTANGULAR PLAY HOUSE

(As described in *Natyashastra*)



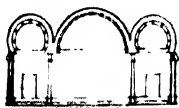
- SIDE ELEVATION -



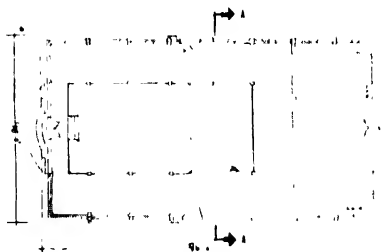
- LONGITUDINAL SECTION -



- FRONT ELEVATION -



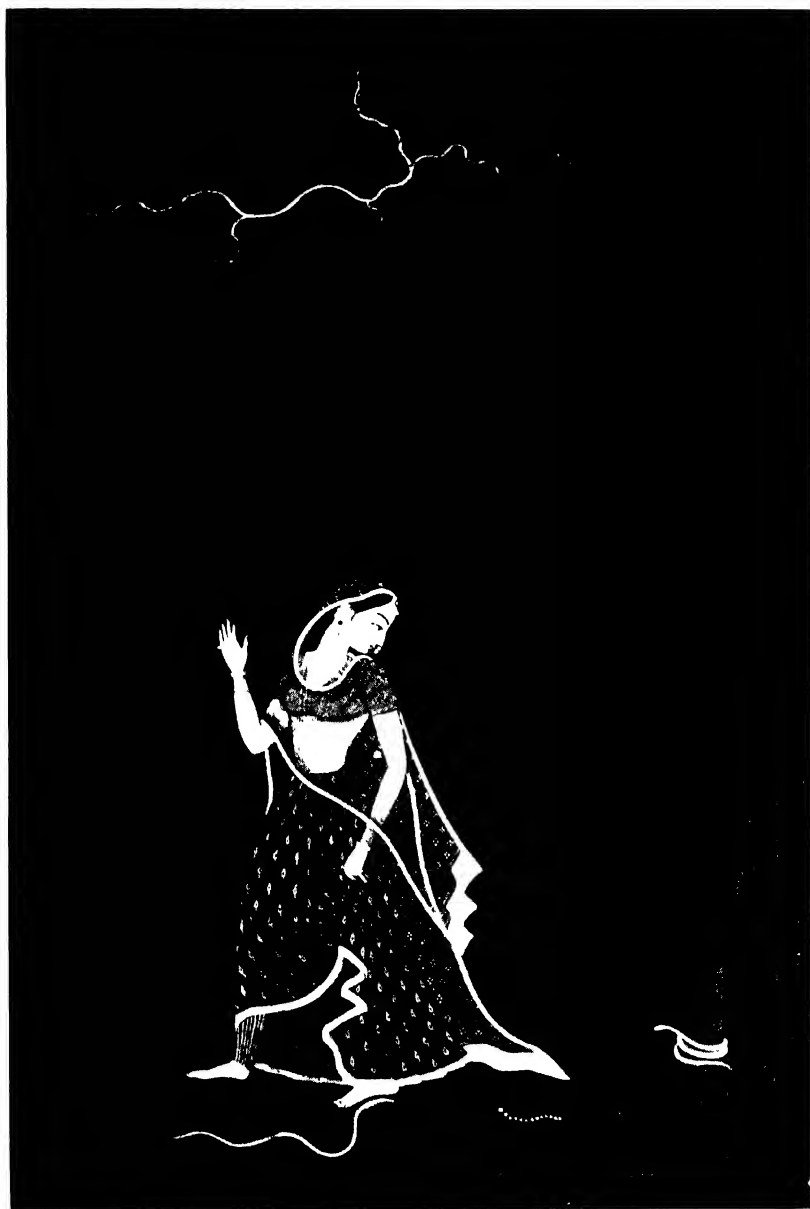
- SECTION -



- PLAN -

PLAN OF A SANSKRIT THEATRE Drawings by Shanta Gandhi, made in conjunction with a model in The Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum, Columbia University, New York. The plan follows specifications in the *Natyashastra*, ascribed to Bharata. See p. xxviii.





LADY IN A STORM, HASTENING TO HER LOVER—Rajput painting. This is a favourite theme in Indian painting. Its most celebrated appearance in drama is in *The Little Clay Cart*. See p. 114.

[Courtesy: The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.]



GIRL WITH THE ANTELOPE. Kippur painting, eighteenth century.  
In Indian art and literature the antelope and the fawn are commonly  
seen as pets protected by a young prince. King Dasharatha enters in the  
first scene of *Shakuntala* pursuing an antelope into the confines of Shu-  
kuntala's hermitage, where protection is granted to it. (See p. 202)

Courtesy The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



COUPLE EMBRACING. East wall of Nandi Madapa, Virupaksha Temple c. 740. Indian sculpture, like Indian drama and poetry, has strong amorous feeling, yet especially in the classical theatre this is suggested with considerable delicacy. The sentiment is expressed both in this noble statuary and in *Vikramorjaya*. See p. 321.

Photo by Stella Kramisch.]



RAMA — Bronze statue of the Gupta period, 320-647 A.D. The hero of the *Ramayana* is subject of a large number of Indian plays, notably two works by Bhavabhuti. See *Rama's Later History*, p. 350.  
Courtesy, The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University.



HEAD OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA WITH HALO OF NAGA HEADS. Vicinity of Angkor Vat, second half of the eleventh century. This image of Buddha wearing a crown of snakes illustrates how actors in *Nagananda* presumably impersonated the snake world. See p. 468.

[Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund]

life itself make the outlook of the Western dramatists preferable. Or could it be perhaps that the two outlooks are not mutually exclusive and are of more nearly equal value than some have thought? Professor Keith's commiseration of the Sanskrit dramatists written nearly forty years ago reads as somewhat provincial today. All his learning in Sanskrit literature notwithstanding, the spell of Aristotle, Shakespeare, and Ibsen had the more compelling force.

Still another distinction between the Sanskrit and the Western drama is revealed by the persistence of Western critics in extolling the characterization of the figures in Greek and English drama and in their regretting the lesser interest in character-drawing found in Sanskrit playwrights. Similarly, the complaint was often heard that the great Spanish drama, notably that of the poetic Calderon, is from both the neo-classical and the romantic standards somewhat deficient both in tragic sentiment and awareness of character. Here is an old argument that of late has taken a turn more favorable to the Indian stage.

The main object of a Sanskrit dramatist is not to distinguish characters but to create a whole, an artistic entity, that shall purify the spirit of the spectator. Are we dealing here with a defect or only a difference? Ibsen may in a play be concerned primarily with seven or eight characters. But a Sanskrit playwright thinks rather in terms of a similar number of acts, each act like a movement in a musical composition, possessing its distinctive mood or sentiment, and the whole constituting a still richer and more highly synthesized sentiment. Such is the main contention in the *Natyasastra*.

Undeniably, the conception of characterization is helpful to drama. The stage by its nature delights in impersonation and throughout the world persons are regarded as in some degree individualized. Sanskrit drama does not deny this. But like the *commedia dell' arte*, it deals specifically with types and from a philosophical viewpoint prefers the notion of types to the doctrine of individualism. In these respects, however, the distance between East and West is being almost daily diminished. A deep-rooted difference exists, but each continent must increasingly escape from its provincialism and profit by a sympathetic understanding of the other. To conclude, the

presence or absence of characterization is on no account a sound basis for acceptance or rejection of any play.

The Renaissance conception of tragedy, as represented by Corneille, of the comedy of manners, as represented by Molière, or of the realization of individualism, as represented by Shakespeare, stands well removed from the Indian stage. At its best this stage aims to depict a state of mind rather than an action and to consider man's life as a single problem. A Western "problem play" is utterly alien to it, for all plays deal with only one all-comprehensive problem. The modern play treating forcefully some current issue would be as foreign to Sanskrit standards of art as the "occasional poem" not long ago seemed foreign to Western standards of pure poetry.

Yet the difference between the two theatres must not be exaggerated. On their surface many Sanskrit plays seem quite of this world and modest in pretension; very simply they depict a love-longing, a political intrigue, or a feud between families, or some domestic vicissitude. The poetry describes a recognizable even if a tropical nature, exotic in Western eyes. The sensuous tone is certainly clear. In all these respects any Western reader knows what a Sanskrit play is "about". He perceives its reference to a fleshly, worldly life and may at his own risk overlook its reference to a transcendental experience.

True, many of the plays deal, in addition to the more accessible characters, with angels, demons, birds, and beasts, and, one must seriously add, trees and vines. All life looks remarkably of a piece, the poet taking the universe lightly in his stride. The most imaginative and poetic plays tend to be the best and to a remarkable degree resemble fairy-tales. They are compacted of myths that do not readily grow old and that have the further property of delighting old and young. On one hand, Sanskrit drama is deeply sophisticated and even at times quite likely in this respect to appear positively decadent; on the other hand, it remains fresh, naive, even over-simple. Yet there are not really two *Shakuntalas*, though in one sense there are as many as the audience itself numbers. The naive and sophisticated profoundly become one. From a materialistic point of view the most complex Sanskrit plays are simply those with the most intricate intrigues and such are the poli-

tical plays, like the *Mudraraksasa*. Fine as that play is, it does not, however, represent the best or most typical work of the Indian theatre, which at its ripest is always both alarmingly worldly and otherworldly, like the typical Western stage and yet unlike it.

A reader of Sanskrit plays in translation gains even more by considering their likeness to his native literature than their dissimilarities. It is well to recognize what peculiar qualities Sanskrit drama contributes to the world's culture but perhaps equally well to realize that in many respects it is strikingly of a piece with the other great stages of the world. He may profitably search his own dramatic or poetic literature for analogous achievements, giving him confidence that on approaching the Sanskrit drama, though far removed in its geography and its medieval origin, he by no means approaches an entirely foreign soil. These conditions are best viewed in the perspectives of history.

Naturally, the religious and sacramental drama of the Christian Middle Ages shares much in common with the religiously mythological and metaphysical Indian stage. Similar conditions exist in the two for each presents a scene with plausible individuals viewed by the audience almost as though historical while the soul of the play remains within the realm of spirit. Moreover, the medieval drama, like the poetry of Chaucer, the most cosmopolitan of English poets, has together with its seriousness a lightness of touch remarkably like the Sanskrit.

Comparisons with Shakespeare and his age are even more revealing and recall how convinced are the Indians today that Shakespeare belongs to them also. Likenesses between the humanity of Shakespeare and Kalidasa, though not easily confirmed by reasoning, are actually quite convincing, and innumerable specific points of contact are readily to be found. Both dramas blend tragedy and comedy, high and low. The romantic scenes in the earlier part of *Nagananda* and many other plays come closest, perhaps, to the Shakespearean play most often seen in India, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, where characterization is often slight. The political and epic scenes in *Mudraraksasa* and *Rama's Later History* suggest the intrigues and battles of Shakespeare's plays on English history.



In Bhavabhuti's masterpiece the excellent psychological observation of Rama's younger son, jealous of his father's fame but not of his person, more nearly suggests some of Shakespeare's maturest characterizations than his own rather superficial portraits of children

The open stage and free, uninhibited treatment of myth and romance in the early Elizabethan drama afford a more accessible road toward the Sanskrit drama than the satires or formal tragedies of the immediately succeeding years, as seen in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, or *Timon of Athens*, or in Ben Jonson's baroque, ponderous but very powerful dramas *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. Satire deals primarily with evil; Indian drama is essentially idealistic. Satire also inclines to prose and even to the prosaic. But the Sanskrit stage prefers both freedom and idealism, with a freedom from fetters of time, place, and astringent morality. Its essence is "poetic license", or imagination unlimited. As mediation between it and the more representative spirit of the Western stage, the English reader does well to recall the singularly licentious and highly poetic dramas of the earlier Elizabethan period.

Two anonymous English plays of semi-medieval character on the life of Mary Magdelene are typical of this theatre unconfined. Many English plays based on Old Testament stories are almost as free as these saints' plays and to this extent resemble the drama grounded on the sacred or semi-sacred books of India. Robert Greene's *David and the Fair Bethseba* might be instanced here. His *Looking-glass for London*, presenting the story of Jonah, contains a stage-direction at least comparable with Sanskrit usage: "Here entereth the whale and casteth up Jonah out of its belly." The extravagance of romantic love as depicted in his *Orlando Furioso* resembles many scenes of the older plays. George Peele's *Arraignement of Paris* has delicate fancy and idealism not far removed from the lighter scenes of Indian contrivance. His *Old Wives' Tale*, like the Sanskrit drama, presents scenes of folklore and folk-legend. Perhaps Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* comes closest of all Elizabethan dramas to the Indian imagination. Harangues in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* resemble harangues in Bhavabhuti's plays on Rama.



It is no accident that all in this group of plays are associated with sources ultimately Oriental. The freedom shown in them rapidly declined under the more regularized drama of the times of Ben Jonson, John Marston, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Middleton, with whose guidance a much greater degree of naturalism was favored and the pathway cleared toward the Restoration. Shades of the prison house began to fall over the great English poetic theatre well before the Puritans closed its doors.

Shakespeare's own practice in his last plays to some extent contradicted the current of the times. Although his *Coriolanus* is in many ways Jonsonian, his *Antony and Cleopatra* is in more ways both of the East and part of it. His late dramatic romances already mentioned are not indebted alone to the facile and brilliant John Fletcher but to some extent hark back to the more expansive spirit of Peele and Greene. The treatment of time past and to come, of memory and prophecy, in these last works at least approximates the Indian point of view, where the imagination is even more distended, not merely to specific points of past and future but over an area so large that the poet's vision appears ubiquitous.

Part of the contradiction and confusion into which Sanskrit drama has from time to time cast its English-speaking critics, such as A. B. Keith, springs from the bland and capricious manner in which, at least to Western eyes, the historical periods of Western literature are dissolved by Eastern practice. The East unites what Westerners have long been taught to think irreconcilables. The religious background of the Sanskrit works suggests medieval drama; their brilliant humanity, so sharply at odds with doctrine Humanism, suggests the popular Elizabethans, as do many of the theatrical conventions of their highly stylized acting. In some respects they stand still closer to the sophisticated drama of the seventeenth century, in which the love-game became most artfully developed.

A further passageway to Indian dramatic art and artifice is cleared by baroque opera, with its court patronage, religious and idealistic sentiment, mythological themes, extravagant fancy, and unfailingly happy endings. But the pictures of nature which the Italian opera enjoyed through its vast painted

drops the Indians enjoyed in their pure poetry. Both species have an essentially musical spirit, though music and dancing presumably played a larger part in baroque opera than on the Sanskrit stage. And though Indian drama is strongly repugnant to the spirit of the later nineteenth-century naturalism, it is by no means remote from much of the earlier romantic drama, as the verse-plays by Byron and Shelley. The figure of Asia seems no more fortuitous in *Prometheus Unbound* than that of Indra in Strindberg's *Dream Play*. *Shakuntala* had already been translated and the Oriental influence was already strongly felt. Flights in aerial cars, for example, are found in Byron's *Cain* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, as in many Sanskrit masterpieces, notably in *Shakuntala* and Bhavabhuti's two impressive plays based on the *Ramayana*.

In the present century Expressionist, Symbolist, and Existentialist drama considerably assist the reader in strengthening his grasp of the Indian theatre. The stage belongs at most to the lower levels of mysticism and religious adventure. Indian drama, it must always be remembered, is worldly as well as otherworldly. But it remains at its best always and unequivocally poetic. Thus its comedy is not prose and its mythological drama not peculiarly poetic. *The Little Clay Cart* is hardly less a poem than *Shakuntala*. Both proceed from creative imagination disciplined and ritualistic in its forms of expression but, to use Emily Dickinson's incomparable phrase, "infinite to venture."

One of the most surprising and valuable aids for a Western reader of the highly poetic Sanskrit drama is a familiarity with the works of William Blake and in particular with Blake's Prophetic Books. These were, of course, illustrated books and, like the theatre, to be apprehended by pictures as well as by words. (The fondness for pictures as stage symbols in Sanskrit drama is pertinent here and one recalls that Indian painting, like Blake's, is symbolical and relies on outline and pure color.) Blake invented much of his mythology, though still more of it came from the four quarters of the globe and a very large portion of this derived ultimately from the great motherland of mystical literature, India. Like the plays, his narrative poems present figures who are concepts rather than

persons. Analysis of life is in this sense scholastic. The portentous figures are born, die and are born again, for ultimately in the ideal world there can be no death. Blake's Los is in this respect like Sita, Rama's bride, who was born in a furrow and returned to earth.

The premise behind such images is that the mental as well as the physical world is eternal and exists on an endlessly revolving wheel. There can be no ultimate antagonisms, for good merges with evil and spiritual with physical, as day into night and night into day. Life can never become wholly bright nor dark, spiritual nor material, good nor ill. Destiny sees to it that forces overstepping their boundaries to excess are turned back like rivers in flood, into their natural courses. Only a mystical denial of all consciousness, impossible to represent on a stage, escapes these antinomies. Blake's "wars in eternity" thus resemble the wars of Rama and Ravana; lovers in both Blake's myths and the Indian alternately lose and find one another. Thought ascends on a scale from experience most deeply immersed in sense, through growing awareness of the cosmic motions, to the ultimate stillness of contemplation. Blake writes little, to be sure, of the last ideal, but the drama itself also finds this essentially inexpressible, because beyond art, which is itself expression. Like Dante's great poem, both Blake's work and that of the Indian playwrights carry us on the rotating wheels; all art stops where the ultimate of mystic vision begins. The still point about which the wheel turns may be described only as motionless and silent. But drama and poetry are primarily concerned with imagined things seen and heard. They are of the world of art and to both Blake and the Sanskrit playwrights art, symbolized either as Blake's Los or Kalidasa's Bharata, represents the highest imaginable worldly fruition. The rest is silence.

Such are some of the more general or philosophical considerations on comparing Western drama with the Sanskrit, both in their likenesses and dissimilarities. At present a period may confidently be said to be dawning in which the distance between the two views both of life and art will be reduced and existing areas of similarity better understood.

When examined from a less speculative height the two theatrical worlds are seen in terms not of their basic principles

but of the stage conventions proceeding from these principles. Many conventions belong to both East and West ; some belong exclusively to the East ; relatively few are found exclusively in the West, for the Western theatre has on the whole been less stylized and conventionalized than that of the East and more addicted to naturalism, the antithesis of convention or artifice. Especially in an advanced culture, an art-convention is likely to be consciously maintained and, as Keith rightly observes, Indian literature and art are extraordinarily sophisticated and self-conscious. Only a few regularized practices not mentioned by the theorists can be discovered. Certainly the dramatists knew well the tricks of their trade. It is remarkable how many of their devices are familiar also in the West and in still other poetic theatres of the world. On the whole the conventions relating to acting are more often held in common with the West than those bearing on play construction. The Sanskrit dramatists used personification, stock characters, plays within plays, thematic symbols more or less as the Elizabethans did later. They knew the uses of soliloquy, aside, the magnified voice from off-stage, the happy and surprising resolution of a complicated plot, employing these devices in a general way but never precisely as did the Europeans. In short, they wrestled with the abiding problems of all sophisticated theatre. They made the most of stage properties and of descriptive poetry spoken on an open stage devoid of scenery in any modern sense of the word. Pantomime was freely employed without aid of naturalistic properties. The Sanskrit dramatists also found new solutions for the age-old problems of verse and prose. They further elaborated their works with dialectical distinctions pushed to an unprecedented degree. Shakespeare, for example, is much more restrained in this regard, though he uses Welch, Scotch and London dialects to distinguish common soldiers in the army of Henry Fifth. Molière delights in introducing dialectical peculiarities observed in his long and comprehensive tours of France. But Sanskrit playwrights are both more drastic and more systematic. Although their procedure is much too elaborate to recount and its nuances threaten to exhaust inquiry, it suffices to state that in all important plays Sanskrit is employed as an exalted language by the side of various familiar dialects, or Prakrits. The author of *The Little Clay Cart*

even condescended to list the several dialects used in his great play, though the causes for his choice he does not explain nor are these today always fully discernible. Yet the refinements in this typical Indian scheme are many and richly rewarding. The drama blended all types of verse, rhetoric, languages and men. The four corner posts of the theatre, we learn, were dedicated to the four orders of society and painted in their appropriate colors. An analysis of the theatrical speech requires one to recall that the scene itself frequently embraced also gods, demi-gods, angels, ancestors, heroes, sages, servants, rustics, citizens, the young and old, birds and beasts, in short, figures in every phase of life. The Sanskrit stage resembled not the cozy square of a Terentian comedy, where one dialect is spoken, but Charles Darwin's tree of life, with the addition of a mythological physics analogous to scientific doctrine in the atomic age. Men and women are presented not only as men and women but as masculine and feminine principles in the universe. A theatre that so expanded the vision of life necessarily expanded as far as possible the scope of language. As a rule Shakespeare employed but one language used in prose and a relatively few types of verse. Clearly, the Sanskrit theatre, more ambitiously orchestrated, cherished an even greater thirst for variety derived, however, from no decadent position in aesthetics, since this variety reflects a profound conviction of unity envisioned in both art and the universe.

A few other conventions of this much-stylized theatre should at least be sketched, for they present an idiom at times foreign to modern readers. Among the conventional characters are the *vita*, or parasite, the *vidushaka*, or clown, usually a renegade Brahman and faithful servant to the hero, the heroine, the antagonist, who is, however, no villain, at least one of the offsprings of the leading figures, and typical ministers, counselors and ambassadors of state.

The plays are divided into acts of varying number but not into scenes analogous to those of Western drama. Each act is customarily given a title of its own and conceived musically as having its own tonal quality or sentiment, its chief cause for being. Each also as a rule begins with an introductory episode using minor characters, sometimes implementing the plot, more often affording symbolical commentary. Several

distinct types of these introductory scenes are recognized. Each act as a rule concludes with a guide-post toward the one to follow. The play begins with elaborate ceremony and a prayer, followed by an episode ingeniously contrived in which the stage manager is the chief speaker. This episode is devised to merge into the play itself. Time of day or night is often stressed both in the acts and their introductions. Conventions govern the fairly frequent use of invisibility, in which respect the Elizabethan stage had at least a few similar though less frequently used artifices. One thinks of the invisibility of Puck in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. An abundant use is made of characters or groups of characters that observe and overhear an episode upon another part of the stage, as in a play within a play. This in particular should be acceptable to English readers, since Shakespeare repeatedly uses the device, as in *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Tempest*, and, in fact, in almost all his works.

Naturally, such a theatre as the Indian knows ghosts, quite as commonly found here as in Shakespeare. It delights in reminiscences and forebodings, always developed in a theatrical spirit, strengthening the sinews and structure of the play. The Indian drama freely employs music and dance. Much of the practice here must remain dark to us but the essentially musical aesthetics of the drama could hardly be more apparent. As in musical theory in ancient Greece, emotional, social and religious values are assigned to various types of music, thus making music all the more available for a self-conscious dramatic art. Each act has its musical mode, as it has its color pattern. Quite frequently the chief characters are performers of music and the lute is often heard. In *The Vision of Vasavadatta* the lute enjoys a name and becomes substantially a third character attendant on hero and heroine and sharing their precarious adventures.

Pictures also play an extraordinary role in Sanskrit theatre. Plays in this book by all the five dramatists represented contain important scenes using this convention. In the conclusion of Bhasa's *The Vision of Vasavadatta* the heroine is identified by means of pictures"carefully scrutinized. The likeness of an unidentified portrait is verified by a companion portrait

of a known subject. The heroes of Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Harsha's *Nagananda* are both visibly represented drawing portraits of their beloved. The long first act of Bhavabhuti's *Rama's Later History*, entitled "The Picture-Gallery," summarizes the antecedent action, affording also a subtle device for penetrating the hearts of the leading figures by showing their reactions to the scenes painted. In Sudraka's *The Little Clay Cart* it is the aggressive heroine who cherishes a portrait of the hero. In all these plays and many others the device of pictures, presumably imaginary so far as actual stage presentation is concerned, occupies a conspicuous place and is varied with imaginative ingenuity.

The important role of nature in the Sanskrit theatre is characteristically dramatized in two of its most powerful scenes. In *Vikramorvasie* the hero interviews many creatures, bird, beast, and tree, inquiring for his lost love, whom he finally recovers by embracing a modest and unadorned vine, into which she has been metamorphosized. In *The Little Clay Cart*, in accord with a tradition long known to Indian art and drama, the heroine rushes to meet her lover through a summer storm at night, the lightning flashing, the deluge precipitating, this tempest in nature analogous to her passionate desire, or, more seriously considered, the woman herself an analogue for the seasonal disturbances in fruitful nature. A principle invigorating the two important plays by Sudraka and Kalidasa became primarily a metaphor in the storm-scenes in *King Lear* and *Macbeth*.

A few words must be added regarding the theatre architecture and the physical circumstances under which this highly conventionalized and sophisticated drama developed. The plays were presented under a great variety of circumstances. Some dramatic performances were seen in sacred caves and temples, especially in the expansive temple yards. Plays were given outdoors and indoors, conditioned, no doubt, to some extent by the season of the year. The *Natyasastra* approves several types of theatre buildings, triangular, square, and rectangular, and further gives elaborate specifications for theatres of different sizes in each category. The same plays could be given outdoors or in, and in one type of theatre or another. In this regard activity was in a fluid state, much



as in the England of Elizabeth, where the same play was often seen in the open-air popular theatres, at court, in the intimate "private houses," and in miscellaneous playing-places in England and abroad when the much-traveled companies went on tour. The Induction to Bhavabhūti's *Rama's Later History* indicates production at a fair or festival and, according to Keith, outdoors and presumably on a large scale before an audience of all classes. In short, the play was the thing and, since unencumbered with stage-scenery, could be successfully put on by its actors under any of these circumstances.

The conditions were, nevertheless, meticulously studied and contrived, especially for court performances. The rectangular theatre seems to have been the most approved type. This in its normal form as described in the *Natyashastra* would be ninety-six feet long by forty-eight feet wide. The building was divided into two squares, one constituting the auditorium, the other, the space for the performers. The latter section, naturally, the more complex in its arrangement, was divided in turn into two equal parts, the section to the rear serving for dressing-room and properties, that to the fore being the stage. The stage in turn was on two levels. An area to the front and center, twenty-four feet wide and twelve feet deep, served as the main part of the stage, eighteen inches above the auditorium floor. This was surrounded on three sides by sections nine inches in height and twelve feet in depth throughout. Specifications are similarly exact for windows and doors. Acoustics are carefully considered, on this account no two doors being permitted opposite each other. Appropriate carvings, mythological, heroic or amorous, adorn all sides of the stage area and paintings similarly conceived cover the auditorium walls. Their subjects are much like those of the plays themselves, the *Ramayana* story presumably being the most conspicuous. The stage is entered, as was the Elizabethan, by two doors at the rear. A curtain with symbolical images is used here and the central space reserved for an always visible orchestra, in this respect conforming with the almost invariable Asiatic practice and suggesting choreographic origins. The structure itself is to be of brick, faced with wood from acoustical considerations. The disposition of the audience is strictly

prescribed by social status, each group having its appointed section. Such was the carefully studied instrument on which the author and his actors played their imaginative compositions, a rigidly fixed form providing the maximum opportunity for imaginative freedom.

A few words may be said in conclusion regarding the selection of plays and translations in this volume. The selection of the plays themselves, at least, has presented relatively few difficulties. The earliest known drama of importance is the collection of thirteen plays by Bhasa, among which *The Vision of Vasavadatta* has been widely conceded the most successful. Its central scene, giving the play its title, admirably represents the metaphysical aspect of the Indian theatre, by which it is so strongly distinguished. Of all Bhasa's plays this was most often of inspiration to his successors and it has been the most frequently translated. As the commonly acknowledged chief of Indian playwrights, Kalidasa alone is represented by more than a single work. Beyond question his *Shakuntala* is the most representative of Sanskrit mythological dramas and its author's masterpiece. But his *Vikramorvasa* is commonly though not far below it in poetic merit and its most memorable scene, the hero's quest through nature's pageantry of bird, beast and tree for his lost love, is certainly one of the most remarkable flights of poetic drama anywhere to be found. The passage as translated by the celebrated Indian poet and thinker, Sri Aurobindo, has a unique force, compelling its presence in any selection. *The Little Clay Cart* is not only by far the chief of Sanskrit comedies, or plays with the scene in civil and contemporary life, but a truly colossal work standing within the vanguard of the world's great comedy. In India it has no rival of its own kind. Its conjunction of political intrigue, erotic romance, and comedy of manners, of poetry with satire and idealism with humor, renders it one of the most richly compounded of all plays. Little doubt exists that *Rama's Later History* is Bhavabhuti's masterpiece. Although its predecessor, *The Adventures of Rama*, is likewise moving and more consistently exalted in tone, in the militant manner of epic poetry, a little of the martial temper goes a long way with the public today and a more engaging example of the Indian epic style than the bloodless wars of Rama's younger son in the closing

scenes of *Rama's Later History* could scarcely be discovered. The mythology of the earlier play is formidable to most modern readers lacking close familiarity with Indian literature. And it is said that in India itself Bhavabhūti's masterpiece has sometimes been preferred even to Kalidasa's. Of the plays represented here the least remarkable are presumably Bhasa's and Harsha's, one typical of the Sanskrit drama in the course of its vigorous, early ascent, the other in the course of its subsequent decline. At least a decline in earnestness and intensity, both in the love scenes and the supernatural episodes of *Nagananda*, has often been remarked. Its relation to the more powerful plays may be compared to that of *The Winter's Tale* to *Othello*. Yet there is no real lassitude nor want of integrity in Harsha's work. The supernatural element in *Nagananda* is of a different character from any seen in earlier selections in this book and eminently typical of the opulence of Sanskrit poetry. The symbol of the red robe of the marriage ceremony become the robe of the heroic sacrificial immolation of the hero before the bird-symbol of destruction would be itself enough to lift the play to imaginative distinction. After a dozen centuries *Nagananda* is still a beautiful work, adequately representing the silver age of the romantic and mythological drama.

The translations have been chosen with a desire to give faithful representation of the original combined with some stylistic distinction in the English version but with full awareness that translation is proverbially a dilution giving only a limited aspect of its original and that in no instance can it be equivalent to the sum of its source. In other words, the best of translations captures only a particular part of a work whose entirety inevitably escapes. But where several items are to be chosen a strategy of eclecticism should remove at least some of the obstructions. Hence to give the broadest available picture of the Sanskrit drama to English readers no two plays are here rendered by the same hand. Two have been translated by Indians, two by Britishers, and two by Americans. The translators deal with their problems in different ways. One uses verse throughout, one combines verse with prose, and four use only prose. One prefers blank-verse, another rhyme. One distinguishes Sanskrit from Prakrits by indentation on the page, while others find no use for this pale distinction.

One translator emphasizes the sententious qualities in his original, another, the colloquial. Such differences of approach should be much more helpful than confusing, enabling the reader to see the works from different angles, as one walks around a statue. In general Bhasa's vigor, Kalidasa's richness, Sudraka's plasticity, Bhavabhuti's eloquence, and Harsha's charm are sensitively revealed. It is believed that so far as the substance of Sanskrit dramatic poetry and theatrical art have as yet been conveyed into English these versions offer a sound representation. The plays themselves are, surely, a major achievement both in spiritual insight and poetic drama.



ATTRIBUTED TO BHASA

*The Vision of Vasavadatta*

TRANSLATED BY  
A. C. WOOLNER AND  
LAKSHMAN SARUP

## INTRODUCTION

BHĀSA is the first Sanskrit dramatist whose works in any number have come down to us intact and is, in fact, the only one whose plays remain extant in any considerable quantity. Fifty years ago he was little more than a reference or a name. His more illustrious successor, Kalidāsa, referred to him with praise and a few quotations existed. In 1912, a manuscript now known as the Trivandrum Plays, containing thirteen works, was disclosed. Although ascription of these pieces to Bhāsa by no means lies beyond dispute, he is possibly author of all or most of them and no proof exists that as presented by the manuscript they have been materially altered from their original form. All, then, are for convenient reference referred to as his. They can be dated only approximately. Several are very short and may even be regarded as parts of longer works or units in a series of plays. Six short pieces based on the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, form a cluster, though not a sequence, and may conceivably have been performed on a single occasion. The most celebrated and from an historical point of view most advanced of all the dramas is that chosen here, *The Vision of Vasavadatta*. A rapid survey of Bhāsa's accomplishments affords an introduction to his masterpiece.

The plays as a whole show on the one hand a broad similarity of approach to dramatic literature and stage conventions, for they abound in action, vigour, and imagination, are free from meretricious rhetoric, and represent a progressive episode in dramatic development; on the other hand they are highly diversified and in this respect unlike the productions of other Sanskrit playwrights known to us, each of whom has left fewer works, these being in the instance of each author much more of a piece. For so elusive a figure as Bhāsa there is small possibility of creating even a hypothetical literary biography. Within the collection there appear in sharpest opposition scenes grave, farcical, epic, sophisticated, popular, courtly, slight, serious, burly or suave. The longer and more ambitious plays are *The Statue Play*, a rapid but strongly executed

dramatization of a large part of the *Ramayana*; *The Consecration*, a less artful version of similar material; reading almost like a scenario, *Avimaraka*, an extremely dexterous love story, which may be summarily described as a tragi-comedy on the theme of *Romeo and Juliet*; *The Adventures of the Boy Krishna*, a refreshing drama, genuine in its pastoralism, making abundant use of folk themes, with much song and dance; and *Carudatta in Poverty*, an early and truncated form of *The Little Clay Cart*, by far the best of Indian comedies.

The brief works are more numerous but likewise of unequal merit. *The Middle One* has been well described as a dramatized fairytale, theatrically effective but undeniably slight. *The Embassy* and *Potsherd as Envoy* are vigorous epic scenes, in their subject-matter full of dramatic tensions and quarrelsomeness, though as art well short of dramatic greatness. But *The Broken Thighs* offers epic dialogue uncommonly rich in tragic emotion, while it is hardly too much to say that *Karna's Task* is one of the most lyric, poetic, and spiritually profound of one-act plays. No syllable is wasted. Action, though largely mental, is dramatic and intense. *The Five Nights* compresses into its brief compass so much mythology that the modern reader is almost sure to find the play confusing and even its original audience may well have found it more congested than succinct. Quite the opposite is *The Minister's Vows*, a relaxed tale skilfully dramatized and enlivened with earthy and variegated humor. Although two of the short plays and a few scenes in the longer ones surpass *The Vision of Vasavadatta* in epic power or comic vivacity, none rivals it in ripeness and suavity of art. One wonders, indeed, that a single hand could have distilled so much of the most strenuous epic poetry of the *Mahabharata* and of the delicate emotional sophistication of the *Ramayana*. To employ European examples, it is as though one author should have composed works as dissimilar as *The Song of Roland* and the courtly romances of Chrestien de Troyes.

The foregoing summary of Bhasa's work indicates at how advanced a stage of development Indian drama stood during his lifetime. Although great dramatic movements have been known to arise with remarkable abruptness, in the instance of India such seems most unlikely. Every indication points



to a long train of potent dramatic activity before Bhasa himself wrote. Certainly the evolutionary forces in this field operated slowly in the succeeding centuries, for his own work contains virtually all major conventions in technique and qualities of thought and feeling characterizing the Indian theatre for nearly a thousand years. Later dramatists composed innumerable variations upon his themes, deepened the vein of symbolism, heightened the poetry, and in the end diluted whatever his own work represented. Sanskrit drama, then, dawns upon us in maturity, grows gradually in splendour, and passes through a long period of decline. There is no revolution. Its first major figure, vigorous and firm, envisioned all except the ultimate decay. It may be added that of all Bhasa's numerous followers, at least in the purely epic style of drama, the closest is Bhatta Narayana, as author of the vigorous and sombre play, *Venisamhara*, which may be read in a spirited translation by Sourindro Mohun Tagore.

Bhasa's most famous play, *The Vision of Vasavadatta*, a highly idealistic work, depicts two women who by virtue of their situation are potentially rivals but by virtue of their goodness of heart are true friends. The two rival queens are so admirable as not even to be tempted to harshness. The king standing at the apex of the triangle represents the embodiment of ironic pathos; while honouring one queen whom he has newly married, he is haunted by the memory of the other, whom he mistakenly believes to be dead. The play is thus a study in time, memory, reality, and illusion, with a temper at times Proustian.

The plot presents a political intrigue of small plausibility in the world of politics but of high effectiveness for the symbolic stage. Both in substance and presentation it is sufficiently unusual to call for a brief summary. A wily minister is confronted with the problem of arranging a marriage essential at a critical juncture to bolster the security of his sovereign's throne. A plurality, or at the very least, a duality, of wives or even of queens is admitted to an Indian monarch. But Udayana is from the political point of view distressingly devoted to his wife, Vasavadatta, whom it is his special joy to instruct in the lute. To contrive this politically needed marriage the devious minister burns a village and circulates a rumor that

both he and the remarkably compliant and loyal Vasavadatta have been consumed in its flames. He then contrives to have her accepted, in disguise, as a lady-in-waiting upon Pādmavati, princess of Magadha, whom he has previously selected in his own mind as bride for Udayana. Udayana is finally induced to visit Magadha and is seen by Vasavadatta, though she remains for most of the time out of his own vision. A famous episode, contrived with as much imagination as ingenuity, leads him for a few moments to think that he beholds Vasavadatta in a vision when he has viewed her in actuality. By overheard conversations Padmavati learns that Udayana is still in love with the wife whom he supposes dead. Meanwhile the unfortunate Vasavadatta is asked to weave Padmavati's wedding garland and to live in almost constant communication with her as her servant.

Why the scheming minister subjected Vasavadatta to such a bitter emotional trial may not be wholly clear in terms of human relations but is perspicuous in terms of emotionally significant drama. The scenes are exquisitely moulded and the resolution of the plot is artfully designed. Although all the characters are as commonplace as keys on a piano, the music played upon them has unsurpassed delicacy. This is emotion for its own sake and the play is to this extent more sophisticated or even decadent than several more impressive and ambitious works which adorn the Sanskrit stage. In symbolic and mythological profundity Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and even Harsha surpass Bhasa as author of this play. *The Little Clay Cart* easily reaches depths of realistic psychology unplumbed by Bhasa's masterpiece of pathos. But his play perfectly achieves its specific goal. As long as Sanskrit drama persisted as a live tradition, it was remembered and to some extent imitated. Bhasa as well as his hero, Udayana, enjoyed a truthful vision. The play remains fragrant and fresh today and within its own somewhat limited terms unexcelled.

# *The Vision of Vasavadatta*

## *Dramatis Personae*

Stage-manager, *Sutradhara*—in Prologue only.

Two guards in the retinue of Princess Padmavati.

YAUGANDHARAYANA, Chief Minister of Udayana, king of the Vatsas.

VASAVADATTA, Princess of Ujjain, daughter of King Pradyota-Mahasena, and the first Queen of Udayana, supposed to have been burnt alive and brought to Magadha in disguise as the Lady of Avanti.

Chamberlain and Maid, from Magadha with Princess Padmavati.

PADMAVATI, Princess of Magadha, sister of King Darsaka. In the last three acts the second queen of Udayana.

Lady hermit.

Student of theology.

Nurse to the princess of Magadha.

Second maid, of the princess Magadha.

Jester (VASANTAKA) of King Udayana.

UDAYANA, king of the Vatsas.

PADMINIKA and MADHUKARIKA, Maids in attendance on the princess of Magadha.

Chamberlain of the Vatsa king of Kausambi.

VIJAYA, Portress at Kausambi palace.

RAIBHYA, Chamberlain from the Avanti court at Ujjain.

VASUNDHARA, nurse of Vasavadatta from Ujjain.

## PROLOGUE

*(At the end of the Opening Ceremony enter the stage-manager.)*

STAGE-MANAGER. May the arms of Balarama protect thee, arms as fair as the young moon at its rising, given their full vigor by wine, full of Beauty incarnate, and lovely as Spring.

*(By paronomasia this verse introduces the names of Udayana, Vasavadatta, Padmavati, and Vasantaka.)*

With these words, my lords and gentlemen, I have to announce to you . . . But what is that ? I thought I heard a noise, just as I was to make my announcement. Well, I must see what it is. •

VOICE (*behind the scene*). Out of the way, there ! Away, sirs, out of the way.

STAGE-MANAGER. So be it. I understand.

The devoted servitors of the King of Magadha, escorting their princess, are sternly driving aside everybody they meet in the Grove of Penance. (*Exit.*)

## ACT ONE

(*Forest road near a hermitage. Enter two guards.*)

GUARDS. Out of the way ! Away, sirs, out of the way !  
(*Enter Yaugandharayana, disguised as a religious mendicant, and Vasavadatta in the garb of a lady of Avanti.*)

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Listening*). What ? Even here are people driven aside ? For,

These grave seniors, dwellers in the hermitage, content with woodland fruits and clad in bark, worthy of all respect, are being terrified.

Who is this insolent fellow, this lack-courtesy, made arrogant by fickle fortune, who by his rough commands is turning a peaceful penance grove into a village street ?

VASAVADATTA. Who is it, sir, that turns us aside ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. One who turns aside his own soul from righteousness.

VASAVADATTA. Nay, sir, that is not what I would say. Am I to be driven aside ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Even the gods, lady, are rejected un-awares.

VASAVADATTA. Ah ! sir, fatigue is not so distressing as this humiliation.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. This is something your Highness has enjoyed and then given up. It should not trouble you. For, Aforetime thou also didst obtain thy heart's desire ; with

the victory of thy lord thou wilt once more attain an exalted state. The series of worldly fortunes revolves with the march of time like the spokes in a wheel.

GUARDS. Out of the way, sirs, out of the way! (*Enter the Chamberlain.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. No. Sambhashaka, no, you must not drive these people aside. Look you,

Bring no reproach on the King. Show no harshness to the inmates of a hermitage. These high-minded men make their home in the forest to escape from the brutalities of a town

GUARDS. Very well, sir. (*Exeunt.*)

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Why, he seems to be an enlightened person. (*To Vasavadatta*) Come, child, let us approach him.

VASAVADATTA. As you please, sir.

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Approaching*). Oh, sir, what is the reason of this hustling?

CHAMBERLAIN. Ah! good hermit.

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Aside*). 'Hermit', of course, is an honourable form of address, but as I am not used to it, it does not please me.

CHAMBERLAIN. Hearken, good sir. Padmavati is here, sister to our great king, named by his parents Darsaka. She has been to visit the queen-mother, Mahadevi, who has made her home in a hermitage, and having taken leave of that noble lady, is on her way to Rajagriha. So today she is pleased to stay in this hermitage. Therefore,

You may fetch from the forest, at your sweet will, holy water, fuel, flowers, and sacred grass. The king's daughter is a friend of piety, she would not wish your pious duties to be hindered. Such is the tradition of her family.

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Aside*). So this is the Padmavati, princess of Magadha, who, the soothsayers Pushpaka, Bhadraka, and others have predicted, is destined to become the consort of my royal master.

Aversion or respect arise from one's purpose. Because I am so eager to see her wedded to my master, I am inspired with great devotion.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Hearing that she is a princess, I too feel for her a sisterly affection. (*Enter Padmavati with her retinue and a maid.*)

MAID. Come this way, please, princess. Here is the hermitage.  
be pleased to enter. (*A lady-hermit is discovered, seated.*)

LADY-HERMIT. Princess, you are most welcome.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). This is the princess. Her beauty proclaims indeed her noble birth.

PADMAVATI. Reverend lady, I salute you.

LADY-HERMIT. Long may you live. Come in, my child, come in. A hermitage is indeed the guest's own home.

PADMAVATI. So it is, your reverence. I feel quite at home, and grateful to you for your kind words.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Her words are as sweet as her looks.

LADY-HERMIT (*To the maid*). My good girl, has no king as yet sought the hand of your blessed sovereign's sister?

MAID. Yes, there is King Pradyota of Ujjain. He has sent an ambassador on behalf of his son.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). I am glad to hear it. And now she has become one of my own dear people.

LADY-HERMIT. Such loveliness well deserves this honour. We have heard that both are mighty royal families.

PADMAVATI (*To the Chamberlain*). Sir, have you found any hermits that will do us the favour of accepting gifts? Distribute according to their heart's desire and demand, by proclamation, what any man would have.

CHAMBERLAIN. As Your Ladyship desires. Hearken, ye saintly men, dwelling in the hermitage, hearken to my words. Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, is gratified by your cordial welcome, and invites you to accept her gifts that she may gain religious merit.

Who, then, needs a beggar's bowl? Who requires a robe? Some student whose studies are complete, according to the Rule, what fee would he have to offer his preceptor? The princess, devoted to those who delight in law, requests you as a favour to herself, whatever any one desires let him declare it, what shall be given today and to whom?

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Aside*). Ah, I see my opportunity (*Aloud*). Sir, I ask a boon.

PADMAVATI. Happily my visit to this penance-grove is fruitful.

LADY-HERMIT. Everybody in this hermitage is contented. This must be some stranger.

CHAMBERLAIN. Well, sir, what can we do for you ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. This is my sister. Her husband has gone abroad. My wish is that Her Highness would take my sister under her protection for some time. For,

No need have I of wealth, or of worldly joys, or of fine raiment, nor have I donned the orange robe to gain a livelihood. The royal maid is wise and knoweth well the path of duty. She can well protect the virtue of my sister.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). So ! the noble Yaugandharayana is determined to leave me here. Be it so, he will not act without reflection.

CHAMBERLAIN. Lady ! His expectation is great indeed. How can we consent ? For,

Wealth it would be easy to give, or one's life, or the fruit of austerity. Anything else would be easy, but hard is the guarding of a pledge.

PADMAVATI. My Lord, after first making our proclamation ---what would anyone have ?---It is improper to hesitate.

Whatever he says, must be done.

CHAMBERLAIN. These words are worthy of Your Highness.

MAID. Long live the princess, who keeps her word.

LADY-HERMIT. Long life to you, blessed lady !

CHAMBERLAIN. Very well, My Lady. (*Approaching Yaugandharayana.*) Reverend sir, Her Highness accepts the guardianship of your sister.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. I am much indebted to Her Highness.

(*To Vasavadatta.*) My child ! Approach Her Highness.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*) There is no escape. I will go, unfortunate that I am.

PADMAVATI. Yes, come hither. Now you belong to me.

LADY-HERMIT. She looks to me like the daughter of the king.

MAID. You are right, reverend mother I, too, can see that she has known better days.

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Aside*). Ah ! half my task is ended.

Things are turning out just as it was arranged with the other ministers. When my royal master is reinstalled and Vasavadatta is restored to him, Her Highness, the Princess of Magadha, will be my surety for her. For, indeed,

Those who first predicted our troubles, foretold that Padmavati was destined to become the consort of my king.

On that prophecy I have relied in acting as I did, for fate does not transgress the words of well-tried oracles.  
(*Enter a Student of Theology.*)

STUDENT (*Looking upwards*). It is midday and I am tired out. Where shall I take a rest? (*Turning round*) Good, there must be a penance-grove nearby, because,

The deer are quietly grazing, free from fear, in a place where they feel safe. All the trees, tended with loving care, have their branches loaded with fruit and blossom. There is a great wealth of tawny kine, but no fields are tilled on any side. Undoubtedly it is a penance-grove, for this smoke arises from many an altar.

I will go in. (*Entering.*) Hallo! This person is out of keeping with a hermitage. (*Looking in another direction.*) But there are also hermits. There is no harm in proceeding further. Oh! ladies!

CHAMBERLAIN. Come in, sir, with perfect freedom, sir. A hermitage is indeed common to all

VASAVADATTA. How now!

PADMAVATI. Oho! this lady shuns the sight of strangers.

Very well, I must take good care of my ward.

CHAMBERLAIN. Sir, we were here first. Please accept our hospitality to a guest.

STUDENT (*Drinks*). Thank you. Now I am refreshed.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Sir, whence have you come, whither are you going, and where is your abode?

STUDENT. I will tell you, sir. I am from Rajagriha. In order to specialize in Vedic studies, I took up my abode in Lavanaka; it's a village in the Vatsa country.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Ah! Lavanaka! At the mention of that name my anguish seems renewed.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. And have you completed your studies?

STUDENT. No, not yet.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. If you have not finished your studies, why have you returned?

STUDENT. A terrible catastrophe has happened there.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. What was that?

STUDENT. There is a king there named Udayana.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. I have heard of His Highness. What about him?



STUDENT. He was passionately enamoured of his queen, Vasavadatta, a princess of Avanti.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Quite possible. What then ?

STUDENT. When the king had gone out hunting the village took fire, and she was burnt alive.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Untrue, untrue, I am living, still, poor wretch !

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Well, go on.

STUDENT. Then in attempting to rescue her a minister named Yaugandharayana fell into the flames himself.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Did he really ? Well, what then ?

STUDENT. Then the king came back, and when he heard the news he was distracted with grief at their separation, and wanted to end his life in that very fire. It was all the ministers could do to hold him back.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Yes, I know my lord's tender feelings for me.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. And then ?

STUDENT. The king clasped to his breast the half-burnt ornaments that had adorned her person and fell down unconscious

ALL. Alas !

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). And now I hope the noble Yaugandharayana is satisfied.

MAID. Princess, this noble lady is in tears

PADMAVATI. She must be very tender-hearted.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Quite so, quite so. My sister is tender-hearted by nature. What happened then ?

STUDENT. Then, by degrees, he regained consciousness

PADMAVATI. Thank goodness, he is alive. The words 'fell down unconscious' took my breath away

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Well, proceed.

STUDENT. Then the king suddenly got up, his body stained with dust from rolling on the ground, and burst into lamentation after lamentation. 'Oh Vasavadatta—Princess of Avanti—Alas, my beloved—my darling pupil—oh !' and so on and so on. In short,

No love birds so lament their loss, nor even those that are bereft of fairy brides. Happy the woman who is thus loved by her lord : consumed by fire, but by reason of

her husband's love not consumed by woe.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. But tell me, sir, was none of his ministers at pains to comfort him ?

STUDENT. Yes, there was a minister named Rumanvan who did his very best to console him.

Like the king he will touch no food, his face is wasted by ceaseless weeping. Depressed by sorrow like his lord, he neglects the care of his person. Day and night he attends untiring on the king. Should the king suddenly depart this life, he also will expire.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Happily my lord is in good hands.

YAUGANDHARAYANA (*Aside*). What a heavy responsibility Rumanvan has to bear ! For,

My burden has been lightened, his toil is constant. Everything depends on him, on whom the king himself depends.

(*Aloud.*) Well, sir, by this time is the king consoled ?

STUDENT. That I do not know. The ministers left the village, taking with them—after great difficulty—the king, who was pouring out a piteous tale. 'Here it was that I laughed with her, here I talked with her, here I sat with her, here we fell out, and here I passed the night with her', and so forth. With the departure of the king the village became desolate like the sky when the moon and the stars have set. Then I, too, came away.

LADY-HERMIT. He must indeed be a noble king who is praised like this even by a stranger.

MAID. What think you, princess, will he offer his hand to another woman ?

PADMAVATI (*Aside*). My heart was asking that very question.

STUDENT. Let me take leave of you. I must be going.

BOTH. Go, and fare you well.

STUDENT. Thank you. (*Exit.*)

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Good. I too wish to go if Her Highness permits.

CHAMBERLAIN. The holy hermit wishes to depart with Your Highness's permission.

PADMAVATI. This gentleman's sister will feel lonely in his absence.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. She is in good hands, she will not repine.

(*To the Chamberlain.*) Pray, let me go.

CHAMBERLAIN. Very well, we shall meet again.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. I hope so. (*Exit.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. It is time now to go within.

PADMAVATI. Reverend lady, I salute you.

LADY-HERMIT. My child, may you get a husband as good as yourself.

VASAVADATTA. Reverend lady, I too salute you.

LADY-HERMIT. And you also, may you soon find your husband.

VASAVADATTA. I thank you.

CHAMBERLAIN. Come, please, this way. This way, my Lady.  
For now,

The birds have returned to their nests. The hermits have plunged into the stream. Fires have been lit and are burning brightly, smoke is spreading in the penance-grove. The sun has dropped a long way down, gathering his rays together he turns his chariot and slowly descends on the summit of the western mountain.

(*Excunt omnes.*)

## ACT TWO

(*Palace garden at Magadha. Enter a Maid.*)

MAID. Kunjarika, Kunjarika ! Where, O where is the Princess Padmavati ? What do you say ? 'The princess is playing at ball near the jasmine bower.' Very good, I shall go to her. (*Turning and looking around.*) Ah ! here comes the princess playing with a ball. The jewels in her ears are turned upwards; the exertion has spangled her brow with tiny drops of perspiration, so that fatigue lends a charm to her face. I will go and meet her. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Padmavati, playing with a ball, accompanied by her retinue and Vasavadatta.*)

VASAVADATTA. Here is your ball, my dear.

PADMAVATI. Dear lady ! Now that is enough.

VASAVADATTA. You have played over long with your ball, my dear. Your hands are quite red, they might belong to someone else.

MAID. Play on, princess, play on. Enjoy these charming days of girlhood while you may.

PADMAVATI. What's in your thoughts, dear lady? I think you are laughing at me.

VASAVADATTA. No, no, my dear. You are looking more beautiful than ever today. I am getting a full view as it were of your pretty face.

PADMAVATI. Away with you! Don't you make fun of me.

VASAVADATTA. Well, I am mute—O daughter-in-law elect of Mahasena!

PADMAVATI. Who, pray, is this Mahasena?

VASAVADATTA. There is a king of Ujjain, named Pradyota, who is called Mahasena on account of the vast size of his army.

MAID. It is not with that king the princess wishes to be related.

VASAVADATTA. Whom does she want, then?

MAID. There is a king of the Vatsas named Udayana. It is of his virtues that the princess is enamoured.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). She wants my noble lord as her husband. (*Aloud*.) For what reason?

MAID. He is so tender-hearted—that's why.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). I know, I know. I, too, fell in love with him like that.

MAID. But, princess, suppose the king is ugly.

VASAVADATTA. No, no. He is very handsome.

PADMAVATI. How do you know that, dear lady?

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Partiality to my lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. What shall I do now? Yes, I see—(*Aloud*.) That is what everybody says in Ujjain, my dear.

PADMAVATI. Quite so. He is not, of course, inaccessible to the people of Ujjain, and beauty fascinates the hearts of all. (*Enter a Nurse*.)

NURSE. Victory to the princess! Princess, you are betrothed.

VASAVADATTA. To whom, good lady?

NURSE. To Udayana, the king of the Vatsas.

VASAVADATTA. Is he in good health, that king?

NURSE. He arrived here quite well, and the princess is betrothed to him.

VASAVADATTA. Alack-a-day!

NURSE. Alack-a-day! Why, what's the matter?

VASAVADATTA. Oh, nothing. His grief was so great, and now he is indifferent.

NURSE. Madam, the hearts of great men are ruled by the Sacred Scriptures, and are therefore easy to console.

VASAVADATTA. Good lady, tell me, did he choose her himself?

NURSE. Oh, no. He came here on some other business; when our king observed his nobility, wisdom, youth, and beauty, he offered her hand of his own accord.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Just so. Thus my lord is without reproach. (*Enter another Maid.*)

SECOND MAID. Make haste, madam. Our queen declares that the conjunction of the stars is auspicious today, and the nuptial celebrations must take place this very day.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). The more they hasten, the deeper the gloom in my heart.

NURSE. Come. Your Highness, come. (*Exeunt omnes*)

### ACT THREE

(*Palace Garden—Enter Vasavadatta, deep in thought.*)

VASAVADATTA. I have left Padmavati in the ladies' court, with its festive wedding crowd of women and have come here alone to this pleasure garden. Here I can give vent to the sorrow which fate has laid upon me. (*Walking about.*) Alas! I am undone. Even my noble lord now belongs to another woman. Let me sit down. (*Sits down.*) Blessed indeed is the Love-Bird. Parted from her mate she ceases to live. But I cannot escape from life. Miserable that I am, I live on in the hope of seeing him again. (*Enter a Maid carrying flowers.*)

MAID. Where has the noble lady of Avanti gone? (*Turning and looking around.*) Ah, there she is, sitting on a stone bench under the *priyangu* creeper. There she sits, wearing a graceful garment unadorned, her mind intent on distant thought, looking like a digit of the moon obscured by mist. I will go up to her. (*Approaching.*) Noble lady of Avanti, I have been seeking you for ever so long.

VASAVADATTA. For what ?

MAID. What our queen says is this : 'The lady comes from a noble family, she is kind and skilful. So let her plait this wedding garland '

VASAVADATTA. And for whom is it made ?

MAID. For our princess.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Must I do even this ? The Gods are indeed cruel.

MAID. Madam, there is no time now to think of other things. The bridegroom is taking his bath in the inland room, so please plait the garland quickly.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). I can think of nothing else. (*Aloud*) My good girl, have you seen the bridegroom ?

MAID. Yes, I have seen him. That was through affection for the princess and my own curiosity.

VASAVADATTA. What is he like ?

MAID. Oh, madam, I tell you I never saw anyone like him.

VASAVADATTA. Well, tell me, tell me, my dear, is he handsome ?

MAID. One might say the God of Love himself, without the bow and arrows.

VASAVADATTA. Thanks, that will do.

MAID. Why do you stop me ?

VASAVADATTA. It is improper to listen to anyone singing the praises of another woman's husband.

MAID. Then please finish the garland as quickly as you can.

VASAVADATTA. I shall do it at once. Give me the flowers

MAID. Here they are. Please take them.

VASAVADATTA (*Turns out the basket and examines the flowers*)

What is the name of this plant ?

MAID. It is called 'Lords and Ladies'.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). I must work in lots of this for myself and Padmavati. (*Aloud*). What do you call this flower ?

MAID. Oh, this is 'Old Wife's Bane'.

VASAVADATTA. We needn't use that one.

MAID. Why not ?

VASAVADATTA. His wife is dead, so it wouldn't be any use.  
(*Enter another Maid*)

SECOND MAID. Please make haste, madam. The ladies of living lords are conducting the bridegroom to the ladies' court.

VASAVADATTA. There, it's ready, I tell you. Take it.

FIRST MAID. How beautiful ! Madam, I must be off. (*Exeunt the two maids.*)

VASAVADATTA. She is gone. Alas ! All is over. My noble lord is now another's. Heaven help me ! I'll to bed; it may soothe my pain, if I can sleep. (*Exit.*)

## ACT FOUR

(*Palace at Magadha —Enter the Jester.*)

JESTER (*Joyfully*). Ha, ha ! How good to see the delightful time of the auspicious and welcome marriage of His Highness the king of the Vatsas. Who could have known that after being hurled into such a whirlpool of misfortune, we should rise again to the surface. Now we live in palaces, we bathe in the tanks of the inner court, we eat dainty and delicious dishes of sweetmeats—in short, I feel myself to be in Paradise, except that there are no nymphs to keep me company. But there is one great drawback. I do not digest my food well at all. Even on the daintiest couches I cannot sleep, for I seem to see the Wind and Blood disease circling round. Bah ! there is no happiness in life, if you are full of ailments, or without a good breakfast. (*Enter a Maid.*)

MAID. Wherever has the worthy Vasantaka got to ? (*Turning and looking around*) Why, here he is ! (*Going up to him.*) Oh, Master Vasantaka, what a search I have had looking for you !

JESTER (*With a leer*). And why are you searching for me, my dear ?

MAID. Our queen says, 'hasn't the bridegroom finished his bath ?'

JESTER. Why does she want to know ?

MAID. So that I may bring him a garland and unguents, of course.

JESTER. His Highness has bathed. You may bring everything except food.

MAID. Why do you bar food ?

JESTER Unfortunate that I am, like the rolling of cuckoo's eyes . . my stomach is like that.

MAID. May you ever be as you are !

JESTER. Off with you ! I will go and attend on his Highness.  
(*Exeunt ambo.*) (*The scene is in the Palace Garden. Enter Padmavati with her retinue and Vasavadatta dressed as a lady of Avanti.*)

MAID. What has brought your ladyship to this pleasure-garden ?

PADMAVATI. My dear, I want to see if the *scoti* clusters have flowered or not,

MAID. Yes, princess, they have, with blossoms like pendants of pearls interset with coral.

PADMAVATI. If that is so my dear, why do you delay ?

MAID. Won't your ladyship sit on this stone bench for a moment while I gather some flowers ?

PADMAVATI. Shall we sit here, dear lady ?

VASAVADATTA. Let us do so. (*Both sit down.*)

MAID (*After gathering some flowers*). Oh, look princess, look !  
My hands are full of the *scoti* blossoms, with their half-way hose of *realgar*.

PADMAVATI (*Looking at the flowers*). See, lady, how brilliant are the colours of these flowers !

VASAVADATTA. Yes, how beautiful they are.

MAID. Princess, shall I pick any more ?

PADMAVATI. No, no, my dear, no more.

VASAVADATTA. Why do you stop her, my dear ?

PADMAVATI. If my noble lord should come here and see this abundance of blossom, I should be so honoured.

VASAVADATTA. Why, my dear, are you so much in love with your husband ?

PADMAVATI. I don't know, lady, but when he is away from me I feel wretched.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). How difficult it is for me. Even she speaks in this strain.

MAID. How delicately the princess has told us that she loves her husband.

PADMAVATI. I have just one doubt.

VASAVADATTA. And what is that ?

PADMAVATI. Was my noble lord as much to Vasavadatta as he is to me ?



VASAVADATTA. Nay, more.

PADMAVATI. How do you know ?

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Ah ! Partiality to my noble lord has made me transgress the bounds of propriety. I know what I will say. (*Aloud*.) Had her love been less, she would not have forsaken her own people.

PADMAVATI. Possibly not.

MAID. Princess, you might gently suggest to your husband, that you too would like to learn to play the lute.

PADMAVATI. I did speak to him about it.

VASAVADATTA. And what did he say ?

PADMAVATI. He said nothing. He heaved a deep sigh, and became silent.

VASAVADATTA. What do you think did that mean ?

PADMAVATI. I think the memory of the noble Vasavadatta's virtues came over him, but out of courtesy he restrained his tears in my presence.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). How happy I should be if that were true !  
(*Enter the King and the Jester*)

JESTER. Aha ! how pretty the garden looks with a thin sprinkling of *bandhujuva* flowers, fallen while they were being gathered. This way, my lord.

KING. Very well, my dear Vasantaka, here I come.

Once in Ujjain, when the unimpeded vision of Avanti's princess brought me to that condition that you know of, the God of Love let fly at me with all his five arrows. Of those I still bear the pain in my heart, and now I am wounded again. If Cupid has only five arrows, what is this sixth dart he has discharged at me ?

JESTER. Where has Lady Padmavati gone ? Has she gone to the creeper-bower ? Or perhaps to the stone seat called the 'Crest of the Hill', which is so strewn with *asana* flowers that it looks as if it were covered with a tiger's skin. Or could she have entered the wood of the Seven-leaved Trees with their powerful pungent scent ? Or perhaps she has gone into the wooden pavilion with crowds of birds and beasts painted on the walls. (*Looking up*.) Oh, look, your Highness ! Do you see this line of cranes advancing steadily along the clear autumn sky, as beautiful as the long white arms of the adored Baladeva ?

KING. Yes, comrade, I see it.

Now stretched in an even line, now wide apart ; now soaring high, now sinking low, crooked in its twists and turns, as the constellation of the Seven Rishis. Bright as a serpent's belly just slipped from its slough, like a boundary line it cuts the sky in two.

MAID. Look, princess, look at this flock of cranes advancing steadily in line, as delicately tinted as a garland of pink water-lilies. Oh ! the King !

PADMAVATI. Ah ! 'tis my noble lord Lady, for your sake I shall avoid seeing my husband. So let us go into this bower of madhavi creepers.

VASAVADATTA. Very well (*They do so.*)

JESTER. Lady Padmavati came here and went away again.

KING. How do you know that ?

JESTER. Just look at these *seoh* clusters from which the flowers have been picked.

KING. Oh, Vasantaka ! What a gorgeous flower it is !

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). That name 'Vasantaka' makes me feel as if I were at Ujjain again.

KING. Let us sit down, Vasantaka, on this stone seat and wait for Padmavati.

JESTER. Very well, sir. (*Sits down and gets up again.*) The heat of the scorching autumn sun is unbearable. So let us go into this bower of *madhavi* creepers.

KING. All right. Lead the way.

JESTER. Very well. (*Both walk round* )

PADMAVATI. The worthy Vasantaka is bent on spoiling everything. What shall we do now ?

MAID. Princess, shall I keep His Highness away by shaking this hanging creeper swarming with black bees ?

PADMAVATI. Yes, do. (*Maid does so.*)

JESTER. Help ! help ! Keep away, Your Highness, keep away !

KING. What is the matter ?

JESTER. I am being stung by these damnable bees.

KING. No, no, do not do that. One should never frighten the bees. Look,

Drowsy with drafts of honey, the bees are humming softly in the close embraces of their love-sick queens. Should our footsteps startle them, like us, they will part from their darlings.

So let us stay here.

JESTER. Very well. (*Both sit down.*)

MAID. Princess, we are in truth made prisoners.

PADMAVATI. Happily it is my noble lord who sits there.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). I am glad to see my noble lord looking so well

MAID. Princess, the lady's eyes are filled with tears.

VASAVADATTA. The moringa pollen has got into my eyes because of the naughty bees and made them water.

PADMAVATI. Quite so.

JESTER. Well, now, there is nobody in this pleasure-garden.

There is something I want to ask. May I ask a question ?

KING. Yes, if you like.

JESTER. Which do you love best, the lady Vasavadatta that was, or Padmavati of today ?

KING. Now why do you put me in such a difficult position ?

PADMAVATI. Oh, my dear; What a difficult position for my noble lord !

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). And for me, too, unfortunate that I am

JESTER. Now you must speak frankly One is dead, the other is nowhere near.

KING. No, my dear fellow, no, I am not going to say anything  
You are a chatterer

PADMAVATI By so much he has said enough

JESTER Oh, I swear truly, I won't tell a soul My lips are sealed

KING. No, my friend, I dare not speak.

PADMAVATI. How stupidly indiscreet he is. Even after that he cannot read his heart

JESTER. What, you won't tell me ? If you don't, you shall not stir a single step from the stone seat. Your Highness is now my prisoner.

KING. What, by force ?

JESTER. Yes, by force.

KING. We shall see.

JESTER. Forgive me, Your Highness. I conjure you in the name of our friendship to tell me the truth.

KING. No escape. Well listen,

Padmavati I much admire for her beauty, charm, and virtue, and yet she has not won my heart still bound to Vasavadatta.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). So may it ever be. This is my reward for all my suffering. My living here unknown is beginning to be delightful.

MAID. Oh, princess, His Highness is very discourteous.

PADMAVATI. My dear, don't say that. My noble lord is courteous indeed, for even now he remembers the virtues of the noble Vasavadatta.

VASAVADATTA. My dear child, your words are worthy of your birth.

KING. Well, I have spoken. Now you must tell me, which is your favourite—Vasavadatta that was, or Padmavati of today?

PADMAVATI. My noble lord is mimicking Vasantaka.

JESTER. What is the use of my chatter? I have the greatest admiration for both their ladyships.

KING. Idiot. You made me tell, and now you are afraid to speak.

JESTER. What, would you force me?

KING. Why, yes, of course.

JESTER. Then you will never hear it.

KING. Forgive me, mighty brahman, speak of your own free will.

JESTER. Now you shall hear. Lady Vasavadatta I greatly admired.

Lady Padmavati is young, beautiful, gentle, free from pride, gently spoken, and very courteous. But there is one other great virtue. Vasavadatta used to come to me with delicious dishes, saying, 'Where has the good Vasantaka got to?'

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Bravo, Vasantaka. You must remember this.

KING. Very well, Vasantaka. I shall tell all this to Queen Vasavadatta.

JESTER. Alas, Vasavadatta ! Where is Vasavadatta ? She is dead long ago.

KING (*Sadly*). It is true, Vasavadatta is no more.

By your raillery you confused my mind, and by force of former usage those words slipped out.

PADMAVATI. This was a delightful conversation, but now the wretch has spoiled it all.

VASAVADATTA (*Aside*). Well, well, I am consoled. How sweet it is to hear these words without being seen.

JESTER. Be of good cheer, Your Highness. Fate cannot be gainsaid. It is so, and that's all there is about it.

KING. My dear fellow, you do not understand my condition. For,

A deeply-rooted passion it is hard to abandon; by constant recollection the pain is renewed. This is the way of the world that the mind must cancel its debt with tears to gain tranquillity.

JESTER. His Highness's face is wet with tears. I will get some water to wash it.

PADMAVATI. Madam, my lord's face is hidden in a veil of tears. Let us slip away.

VASAVADATTA. Yes, let us go. Nay, you stay here. It is not right for you to go and leave your husband unhappy. I will go alone.

MAID. The lady is right. You should go to him, Princess.

PADMAVATI. What do you say ? Shall I go ?

VASAVADATTA. Yes, dear, do. (*Exit.*)

JESTER (*Entering, with water in a lotus leaf*). Why, here is Lady Padmavati.

PADMAVATI. What is it, my good Vasantaka ?

JESTER. This is that, that is this.

PADMAVATI. Speak out, sir, speak.

JESTER. Lady, the pollen of the moringa flowers, carried by

the wind, has got into His Highness's eyes, and his face is wet with tears. Please take him this water to wash his face.  
 PADMAVATI (*Aside*). Oho ! like master, like man, how courteous he is. (*Approaching the king*.) Greeting, my lord. Here is some water for your face.

KING. Eh, what, Padmavati ? (*Aside to Jester*.) What's this, Vasantaka ?

JESTER. It's like this. (*Whispers in his ear*.)

KING. Bravo, Vasantaka, bravo. (*Sipping water*.) Padmavati, pray be seated.

PADMAVATI. As my lord commands. (*Sits down*.)

KING. Padmavati,

The motes of the moringa blossoms, agitated by the breeze, fair lady, have bathed my face in tears

(*Aside*.) She's but a girl and newly wed ; should she learn the truth it would distress her. Courage she has, it is true, but women are by nature easily alarmed.

JESTER. This afternoon His Majesty the King of Magadha will, as usual, receive his friends, giving yourself the place of honour. Courtesy reciprocating courtesy engenders affection. So it is time for Your Highness to make a move.

KING. Yes, indeed. It is a good suggestion. (*Rises*.)

Men of eminent virtues are easily found in this world, as those whose hospitable treatment is unfailing, but it is difficult to find men who duly appreciate these qualities.  
 (*Exeunt omnes*.)

## ACT FIVE

(*At Magadha* )

PADMINIKA (*Entering*). Madhukarika, oh, Madhukarika, come here quick.

MADHUKARIKA (*Entering*). Here I am, my dear, what do you want me to do ?

PADMINIKA. Don't you know, my dear, that Princess Padmavati is ill with a bad headache ?

MADHUKARIKA. Alas !

PADMINIKA. Run quick, my dear, and call Madam Avantika. Only tell her the princess has a headache, and she will come of her own accord.

MADHUKARIKA. But, my dear, what good can she do ?

PADMINIKA. Why, she will tell the princess pleasant stories and drive away the pain.

MADHUKARIKA. Very likely. Where have you made up the princess's bed ?

PADMINIKA. It is spread in the sea-room. Now you go. I shall look for the good Vasantaka, to inform His Highness.

MADHUKARIKA. Very well. (*Exit.*)

PADMINIKA. Now I will look for the good Vasantaka. (*Enter the Jester*)

JESTER. The heart of the illustrious king of the Vatsas was depressed by separation from his queen, but now on this auspicious and extremely joyful occasion, fanned as it were by this marriage with Padmavati, it burns the more fiercely with the flame of the fire of love (*Observing Padminika.*) Hallo ! Here's Padminika Well, Padminika, what's the news ?

PADMINIKA. My good Vasantaka, don't you know that Princess Padmavati has a bad headache ?

JESTER. Truly, lady, I did not know.

PADMINIKA. Well, let His Highness know about it. Meanwhile I will hurry up with the ointment for her forehead

JESTER. Where has Padmavati's bed been made up ?

PADMINIKA. It is spread in the 'sea-room'.

JESTER. Well, you had better be off. I will tell his Highness. (*Exeunt ambo.—Enter the King*)

KING. Once again, with the lapse of time, I have taken up the burden of wedlock, but my thoughts fly back to Avanti's daughter, worthy daughter of a worthy sire; to her, whose slender frame was consumed by the fire at Lavanaka, like a lotus-plant blasted by the frost. (*Enter the Jester.*)

JESTER. Quick, Your Highness, quick.

KING. What is the matter ?

JESTER. Lady Padmavati has a bad headache.

KING. Who told you ?

JESTER. Padminika told me.

KING. Alas !

Now that I have won another bride, endowed with grace and beauty, and possessed of all the virtues, my grief is somewhat dulled, yet after my experience of woe, still sick with the former pain, I anticipate the like for Padmavati.

Where is Padmavati ?

JESTER. They put her bed in the sea-room.

KING. Then show me the way.

JESTER. Come this way, your Highness. (*Both walk round.*)

This is the sea-room. Be pleased to enter.

KING. You go in first.

JESTER. Very well, sir. (*Enters.*) Help, help. Back, Your Highness, stand back.

KING. What is the matter ?

JESTER. Here's a snake wriggling on the floor. Its body is visible in the light of the lamp.

KING (*Entering, has a look round, and smiles*). Ha ! the idiot thinks he sees a snake,

For the dangling garland dropped from the portal arch, and lying stretched along the ground, thou dost suppose, poor fool, to be a serpent Turned over by the light evening breeze it does move somewhat like a snake.

JESTER (*Looking closely*). Your Highness is right. It is not a snake.

(*Entering and looking round*) Lady Padmavati must have been here and gone away.

KING. She cannot have come, comrade

JESTER. How do you know that ?

KING. What need of knowing ? Look,

The bed has not been pressed, it is as smooth as when made. There is not a crinkle in the counterpane, the pillow is not rumpled nor stained with medicines for an aching head There is no decoration to divert the patient's gaze Those who are brought to bed by illness are not likely to leave it so soon.

JESTER. Then you might sit down on the bed for a while and wait for Her Ladyship.

KING. Very well. (*Sits down.*) I feel dreadfully sleepy, old fellow. Tell me a story.



JESTER. I will tell you a story, but Your Highness must say 'Oh !' or something to show you are listening.

KING. Very well.

JESTER. There is a town called Ujjain. There there are most delightful swimming baths.

KING. What, Ujjain did you say.

JESTER. If you do not like this story, I will tell you another.

KING. Comrade, it is not that I do not like it. But.

I remember the daughter of Avanti's king. At the moment of leaving she thought of her kinsfolk, and through affection a tear welled up, which, after clinging to the corner of her eye, fell on my breast.

Moreover,

Time and again during her lessons she would fix her gaze on me and, dropping her quill, her hand would go on playing in the air.

JESTER. All right. I will tell you another.—There is a town called Brahmadatta where there was once a king named Kampilya.

KING. What's that ? What did you say ? (*Jester repeats what he has just said.*)

KING. Idiot ! You should say King Brahmadatta and Kampilya City.

JESTER. Is Brahmadatta the king and Kampilya the city ?

KING. Yes, that's right.

JESTER. Well, then, just wait a moment, while I get it pat. 'King Brahmadatta, Kampilya City.' (*Repeats this several times.*) Now listen.—Why, His Highness is fast asleep. It is very chilly at this hour. I will go and fetch my cloak. (*Exit.—Enter Vasavadatta in Avanti dress and a Maid.*)

MAID. Come this way, lady. The princess is suffering from a severe headache.

VASAVADATTA. I am so sorry. Where has her bed been made up ?

MAID. It is spread in the sea-room.

VASAVADATTA. Well, you lead the way. (*Both walk round.*)

MAID. This is the sea-room. Go in, madam. I will hurry up the ointments for her forehead. (*Exit.*)

VASAVADATTA. Oh, how cruel are the gods to me. Padmavati, who was a source of comfort to my lord in the agony of his

bereavement, has now fallen ill herself. I will go in. (*Entering and looking round.*) Ah! how careless the servants are. Padmavati is ill and they have left her alone with only a lamp to keep her company. So, she is asleep. I shall sit down. But if I sit elsewhere it might look as if I had but little love for her. So I shall sit on the same bed. (*Sits down.*) Why is it that now I am sitting beside her, my heart seems to thrill with joy? Happily her breathing is easy and regular. Her headache must have gone. And by leaving me one side of the bed she seems to invite me to clasp her in my arms. I will lie by her side. (*Proceeds to lie down.*)

KING (*Talking in his sleep*). O Vasavadatta.

VASAVADATTA (*Starting up.*) Ah! It is my lord and not Padmavati. Has he seen me? If so, the elaborate scheme of the noble Yaugandharayana will come to naught.

KING. O daughter of Avanti's king.

VASAVADATTA. Happily my lord is only dreaming. There is no one about. I shall stay a little while and gladden my eyes and my heart.

KING. Dear one, my darling pupil, answer me

VASAVADATTA. I am speaking, my lord, I am speaking.

KING. Are you displeased?

VASAVADATTA. Oh no! Oh no! Only very miserable.

KING. If you are not displeased, why do you wear no jewels?

VASAVADATTA. What could be better than this?

KING. Are you thinking of Viracika?

VASAVADATTA (*Angrily*). O fie. Even here Viracika!

KING. Then I entreat forgiveness for Viracika. (*Stretches out his hands.*)

VASAVADATTA. I have stayed too long. Some one might see me. I will go. But first I will put back on the bed that hand of his hanging down. (*She does so and exit.*)

KING (*Rising suddenly*). Stay! Vasavadatta, stay! Alas!

Rushing out in my confusion, I struck against a panel of the door, and now I have no clear idea whether or no this was really my heart's desire. (*Enter the Jester.*)

JESTER. Ah! Your Highness is awake.

KING. Delightful news! Vasavadatta is alive.

JESTER. Oh, help us! What's this about Vasavadatta? Why she died long ago.

KING. Say not so, my friend,

As I lay sleeping on this couch she wakened me and disappeared: Rumanvan deceived me when he said she perished in the fire.

JESTER. Goodness gracious! but it's impossible, isn't it? I was talking about the swimming baths and you have been thinking of Her Ladyship, and you must have seen her in a dream.

KING. So then it was only a dream.

If that was a dream, how glorious never to wake again;  
if this be illusion, long may that illusion last.

JESTER. There is a sylph dwelling in this city named Avantisundari. That's what you must have seen, my dear fellow.

KING. No, no,

At the end of my dream I awoke and saw her face; the eyes strangers to collyrium and the long unbraided locks were those of a lady guarding her virtue.

Beside, see, comrade, see

This arm of mine was closely clasped by the agitated queen. Even now it has not ceased to thrill with joy though it felt her touch only in a dream.

JESTER. Come, now, no futile fancies. Come along, let us go to the ladies' court. (*Enter the Chamberlain*)

CHAMBERLAIN. Greeting to my noble lord. King Darsaka, our sovereign lord, sends you these tidings: Rumanvan, the minister of your Highness, has arrived in the vicinity with a large force to attack Aruni. Likewise my own victorious army, elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry, is equipped and ready. Arise, therefore. Moreover,

Your foes are divided. Your subjects, devoted to you by reason of your virtues, have gained confidence. Arrangements are completed to protect your rear when you advance. Whatever is needed to crush the foe has been provided. Forces have crossed the Ganges, the Vatsa kingdom is in the hollow of your hand

KING (*Rising*). Very good. Now,

I shall see that Aruni, adept in dreadful deeds and in the battlefield, surging like a mighty ocean with huge elephants and horses, with a lashing spray of arrows on the wing,—I will destroy him. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

## ACT SIX

*(The Palace of Kausambi. Enter a Chamberlain.)*

CHAMBERLAIN. What ho, there ! Who is on duty at the door of the golden arch? *(Enter Portress.)*

PORTRESS. Sir, it is I, Vijaya. What do you want me to do ?

CHAMBERLAIN. Good woman, to take a message to Udayana, whose glory has increased by the capture of the Vatsa kingdom. Tell him that a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan has come here from the court of Mahasena. Also Vasavadatta's nurse, named Vasundhara, sent by Queen Angaravati. They are both waiting at the gate.

PORTRESS. Sir, this is not the place or time for a porter's message.

CHAMBERLAIN. Not the place or time—how's that ?

PORTRESS. Listen, sir. Today some one in the sun-faced palace was playing on the lute. When my lord heard it he said, 'I seem to hear the notes of my lute, Ghoshavati'

CHAMBERLAIN. And then ?

PORTRESS. Then somebody went and asked where he got that lute. He said he had found it lying in a thicket of reeds on the banks of the Narmada. If it was any use, they could take it to the king. So they brought it, and my lord pressed it to his side and went off in a swoon. When he came to himself, with tears running down his face, he said, 'Thou art found, Ghoshavati, but her we cannot see!'—That, sir, is why the occasion is unsuitable. How can I take your message ?

CHAMBERLAIN. My good woman, you must really let him know, for this as it were hangs on that.

PORTRESS. I will let him know, sir. Why, here is my lord coming down from the sun-faced palace. I shall tell him here.

CHAMBERLAIN. Yes, do, good woman. *(Exeunt.—Enter the King and the Jester.)*

KING. Oh, my lute, whose notes are so sweet to the ear, after reposing in the lap of the queen and resting against her twin bosoms, how camest thou to dwell in that dreadful abode in the wilds, where flocks of birds have fouled thy strings ?

How heartless art thou, Ghoshavati, with no memory of thy unhappy mistress :

How she pressed thee to her side as she bore thee on her hip ; how when weary she tucked thee softly between her breasts ; how she bewailed the loss of me when we were parted ; how she smiled and chatted in the intervals of playing.

JESTER. Enough now, don't torment yourself beyond measure.

KING. Say not so, dear friend.

My passion, for a long time dormant, has been awakened by the lute, but the queen, who loved this lute, I cannot see.

Vasantaka, have Ghoshavati refitted with new strings by some skilful artist and bring it back to me at once.

JESTER. As your Highness commands. (*Exit, taking the lute. Enter Portress.*)

PORTRESS. Greeting, my lord. There has arrived here from the court of Mahasena a chamberlain of the Raibhya clan and also Vasavadatta's nurse, Dame Vasundhara, sent by the Queen Angaravati. They are waiting at the entrance.

KING. Then go and call Padmavati.

PORTRESS. As my lord commands.

KING. Can Mahasena have learned this news so soon ? (*Enter Padmavati and the Portress.*)

PORTRESS. This way, princess.

PADMAVATI. Greeting, my noble lord.

KING. Padmavati, did they tell you ? A chamberlain named Raibhya has come from Mahasena with Dame Vasundhara, Vasavadatta's nurse, from Queen Angaravati, and they are waiting outside.

PADMAVATI. My noble lord, I shall be glad to have good news of my relative's family.

KING. It is worthy of you to speak of Vasavadatta's relatives as your own. Padmavati, be seated. Now why do you not sit down ?

PADMAVATI. My noble lord, would you have me seated at your side when you receive these people ?

KING. What harm is there in that ?

PADMAVATI. That your lordship has married again may seem like indifference.

KING. To hide my wife from the view of people who would see her would create a great scandal. So please be seated.

PADMAVATI. As my noble lord commands. (*Sits down.*) My lord, I am rather uneasy as to what the dear parents will say.

KING. Quite so, Padmavati.

My heart is full of misgivings as to what he will say. I stole away his daughter, and I have not kept her safe. Through fickle fortune I have greatly injured my fair name and I am afraid, like a son who has roused his father's wrath.

PADMAVATI. Nothing can be preserved when its time has come.

PORTRESS. The chamberlain and the nurse are waiting at the door.

KING. Bring them in at once.

PORTRESS. As my lord commands (*Exit Enter the Chamberlain, the Nurse, and the Portress.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. To visit this kingdom, allied to ours by marriage ties, is a great joy, but when I remember the death of our princess I am filled with sorrow. O Destiny, was it not enough for thee that the kingdom should be seized by foes if the welfare of the queen remained?

PORTRESS. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

CHAMBERLAIN (*Approaching the king*) Greeting to Your Highness.

NURSE. Greeting, Your Highness.

KING (*Respectfully*). 'ॐ,

That king who regulates the rise and fall of royal dynasties on this earth, that king with whom I craved alliance, tell me, is he well?

CHAMBERLAIN. Why, yes. Mahasena is very well, and he would be informed of the health of everybody here.

KING (*Rising from his seat*). What are the commands of Mahasena?

CHAMBERLAIN. This is worthy of Vaidehi's son. Now pray be seated and listen to Mahasena's message.

KING. As Mahasena commands. (*Sits down.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. 'Congratulations on the recovery of your kingdom seized by enemies, for,

There is no energy in those that are weak and faint-hearted—while the glory of kingship is enjoyed as a rule only by those that have energy.'

KING. Sir, it is all due to the might of Mahasena. For, Aforetime when he had vanquished me he cherished me with his own sons. His daughter I stole away by force, but have not kept her safe. Now, learning of her decease, he shows me the same affection, for the king is the cause of my regaining the land of the Vatsas, my lawful subjects.

CHAMBERLAIN That is the message of Mahasena. The queen's message will be delivered by this lady.

KING. Ah ! tell me, nurse.

The holy goddess of the city, chief among the sixteen queens, my mother—so afflicted with grief at my departure—is she in good health ?

NURSE. The queen is well, and sends inquiries for the health of your lordship and all that are yours.

KING. The health of all that are mine ? Ah, nurse, what sort of health is that ?

NURSE. Nay, now, my lord, do not torment yourself beyond measure.

CHAMBERLAIN. Compose yourself, my noble lord

Though Mahasena's daughter has passed away, she has not ceased to exist, while she is so mourned by her noble lord. But verily whom can anyone protect in the hour of death ? When the rope breaks, who can hold the pitcher ? It is the same law for men and trees : now they grow and anon they are cut down.

KING. Nay, sir, say not so.

Mahasena's daughter was my pupil and my beloved queen. How could I forget her, even in births to come ?

NURSE. Thus saith the queen : 'Vasavadatta has passed away. To me and to Mahasena you are as dear as our Gopala and Palaka, for from the very first we intended you to be our son-in-law. That is why you were brought to Ujjain. Under the pretext of learning the lute we gave her to you, with no ritual fire as witness. In your impetuosity you carried her off without the celebration of the auspicious nuptial rites. So then we had portraits painted of you and of Vasavadatta on a panel, and therewith celebrated the marriage. We send you the portraits, and hope the sight of them will give you satisfaction.

KING. Ah, how loving and how noble is the message of her Majesty !

Those words I hold more precious than the conquest of a hundred realms. For I am not forgotten in her love, in spite of all my transgressions.

PADMAVATI. My lord, I would like to see the portrait of my eldest sister and salute her.

NURSE. Look, princess, look. (*Shows her the picture* )

PADMAVATI (*Aside*). Why ! It is very much like the Lady Avantika. (*Aloud* ) My lord, is this a good likeness of her ladyship ?

KING. Likeness ? No, I think it is herself Oh, alas !

How could cruel calamity befall this charming loveliness ?

How could fire ravage the sweetness of this face ?

PADMAVATI. By looking at my lord's portrait I can tell whether her ladyship's is a good likeness or not.

NURSE. See here, princess

PADMAVATI (*Looking*). My lord's portrait is so good, I am sure her ladyship's must be a good likeness too

KING. My queen, ever since you looked at the picture I see you are delighted but perplexed. Why is that ?

PADMAVATI. My noble lord, there is a lady living here who is exactly like this portrait.

KING. What, of Vasavadatta ?

PADMAVATI. Yes.

KING. Then send for her at once.

PADMAVATI. My noble lord, a certain brahman left her with me as a ward, before my marriage, saying that she was his sister. Her husband is away, and she shuns the sight of other men. So when you see her in my company you will know who it is.

KING. If she be a brahman's sister, it is manifest she must be another. Identity of form occurs in life as of very doubles. (*Enter Portress.*)

PORTRESS. Greeting to my noble lord. Here is a brahman from Ujjain who says he placed his sister as a ward in the hands of the princess. He wants to take her back, and he is waiting at the door.

KING. Padmavati, is this the brahman you spoke of ?

PADMAVATI. It must be.



KING. Let the brahman be introduced at once with the formalities proper to the inner court.

PORTRESS. As my lord commands. (*Exit.*)

KING. Padmavati, do you bring the lady.

PADMAVATI. As my noble lord commands. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Yaugandharayana and the Portress.*)

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Ah ! (*Aside.*)

Though it was in the king's interest that I concealed the Queen Consort, though I can see that what I've done is to his benefit, yet even when my work is done my heart misgives me as to what my royal master will say.

PORTRESS. Here is my lord. Approach him, sir.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Greeting to Your Highness, greeting !

KING. I seem to have heard that voice before.—Sir Brahman, did you leave your sister as a ward in the hands of Padmavati ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Certainly I did

KING. Then let his sister come here at once without delay.

PORTRESS. As my lord commands. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Padmavati, Avantika, and Portress.*)

PADMAVATI. Come, lady. I have pleasant news for you.

AVANTIKA. What is it ?

PADMAVATI. Your brother has come

AVANTIKA. Happily he still remembers me

PADMAVATI (*Approaching*). Greeting, my noble lord. Here is my ward

KING. Make a formal restitution, Padmavati. A deposit should be returned in the presence of witnesses. The worthy Raibhya here and this good lady will act as recorders.

PADMAVATI. Now, sir, resume your charge of this lady.

NURSE (*Looking closely at Avantika*). Oh, but this is the princess Vasavadatta

KING. What, Mahasena's daughter ? Oh, my queen, go into the ladies' court with Padmavati.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. No, no, she must not go in there. This lady, I tell you, is my sister.

KING. What are you saying ? This is the daughter of Mahasena.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. O king,

Born in the Bharata clan, you are self-controlled, enlight-

ened, and pure. To take her by force were unworthy of you, a model of kingly duty.

KING. Very well, but let us just see this similarity of form. Draw the curtain aside.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Greeting to my royal master.

VAŚAVADATTA. Greeting to my noble lord.

KING. Heavens ! This is Yaugandharayana, and this is Mahasena's daughter.

This time it is true, or do I see the vision again ? I saw her before just like this, but was deceived.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Sire, by concealing the queen I am guilty of a grave offence. Please pardon me, my royal master. (*Falls at his feet.*)

KING. (*Raising him*). You are certainly Yaugandharayana. By feigning madness, by battles and by plans worked out according to the codes of polity—you, by your exertions, raised me up when I was sinking.

YAUGANDHARAYANA. I do but follow the fortunes of my royal master.

PADMAVATI. So then this is her Majesty the Queen. Lady, in treating you as a companion, I have unwillingly transgressed the bounds of propriety. I bow my head and beg your forgiveness.

VAŚAVADATTA. Rise, rise, happy lady of a living lord, rise, I say. If anything offends it is your suppliant form.

PADMAVATI. I thank you !

KING. Tell me, my dear Yaugandharayana, what was your object in concealing the queen ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. My one idea was to save Kausambi.

KING. What was your reason for putting her in the hands of Padmavati as a ward ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. The soothsayers, Pushpaka and Bhadraka, had predicted that she was predestined to become your queen.

KING. Did Rumanvan know of this ?

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Sire, they all knew.

KING. Oho ! what a rogue he is—Rumanvan !

YAUGANDHARAYANA. Sire, let the worthy Raibhya and this good lady return this very day to announce the news of the safety of the queen.

KING. No, no. We will all go together, taking Queen Padma-  
vati.

YAUGANDHARAYANA As Your Majesty commands.

#### EPILOGUE

This earth, that extends to the ocean, with the Himalaya  
and Vindhya mountains as ear-drops—may our Lion  
King rule over her, marked with the symbol of a single  
sovereign away.

ATTRIBUTED TO KING SUDRAKA

*The Little Clay Cart*

TRANSLATED BY  
REVILO PENDLETON OLIVER

## INTRODUCTION

THIS gigantic comedy presents few difficulties to the modern reader beside those implicit in its own spaciousness and scope. Although always explicitly Indian, it is to a remarkable degree implicitly universal. Holding up a mirror to time and place, it interprets the essential in mankind. On the one hand are apparent the manners, customs, institutions and habits of thought of a large Indian city in the thriving Gupta period, or, in European terms, of the early Middle Ages; on the other hand, the basic motives of the characters never become obscure and the spirit of the work remains always deeply human. The reader or spectator observes the sights of the city streets, hears the characteristic noises, experiences the odours, senses the very atmosphere; he enters the houses, notes the doors, rooms, decorations; he encounters all classes of people, officials from prince to policeman, and men and women of all stations, everywhere listening to their significant chatter. The play's reader today enjoys the charms of the exotic and yet through the poet's art and insight finds himself completely at home.

Important in the story are a faithful wife and an equally devoted hetaera. The leading figure is a brahmana, distinguished for piety; yet the playwright's admiration, which is catholic though never romantically optimistic, extends to gamblers and even to thieves. Private and public life are depicted as so far interwoven that it becomes impossible to separate them; although the greater part of the play deals with a personal world, in the end the secondary theme, the political, becomes the determining factor in the story. There are many characters, many episodes, and a brilliantly shifting kaleidoscope of scenes. Yet this weight of material never causes the play to sag nor interest to decline. If, to borrow from *Hamlet*, the work is never as heavy as Seneca, neither is it as light as Plautus. Eclecticism proves its good fortune. The vitality can neither be overlooked nor adequately explained. It is.

Perhaps the readiest clue to relieve the sense of mystery lies in the title itself. This refers to a toy. The son of the

hero, Charudatta, has, during his father's honourable poverty, enjoyed only a clay cart. Through the generosity of the wealthy hetaera he receives in its place the cart of his heart's desire, made of gold. But the symbolic clay cart was still a toy, much as Charudatta proves as noble in poverty as he becomes at the play's end in his wealth, when political good fortune elevates him to the governorship of a province. Life is thus to be prized from high to low in terms of essence, not of appearance, among rich and poor, those haunting the streets and those inhabiting the palace. The only thoroughly despicable figure, comic though dangerous in his criminal folly, is Charudatta's foil, a completely selfish prince. He is in the end utterly rejected. Generosity in every sense is the moral of this highly moral comedy, for all Indian plays of consequence are in one way or another works of edification as well as of amusement, spiritual as well as aesthetic. Charudatta, once a man of wealth, has entered temporarily upon relative poverty through his extreme generosity or liberality. The play's lesson, pragmatically considered, is that in the long run it pays to make friends. The generous man is the hero, the niggard, the villain. Like a major figure in a play by Strindberg, Charudatta dominates the scenes even when, as is often the case, he yields the stage to other no less colourful characters. The celebration of loyalty in friendship notable in *The Little Clay Cart* anticipates much the same attitude expressed in another powerful and eminently secular play, Vickradatta's *Mudraraksasa*, where political life is treated with Machiavellian cynicism but friendship presented idealistically.

A much larger generosity than alms-giving is implicit in the playwright's conception. His work represents a colossal affirmation of the value of human living. His thought is humorous and pathetic, tolerant and satiric, gay and at moments even tragic, but it never becomes cynical. At its core lies the experience of spiritual well-being, which permits a comprehensive and an urbane view of the world in all its bewildering assortment of pleasure and pain. Sudraka is as affirmative as Kalidasa; the faith of the one contemplates the variants of social living, that of the other, the synthesis of religion.

The author of this extraordinary work, the name "Sudraka"

notwithstanding, remains unknown. The ascription to this king is now almost universally regarded as a mere gesture; somewhat as the ascription of the Psalms to King David. The distinction is simply that whereas David is an eminently historical figure, literary historians fail to agree as to who, if anyone, Sudraka may have been. The name itself has proved elusive and several candidates have been suggested but none demonstrably proven. Possibly the author sought anonymity and fashioned the monarch out of whole cloth. Since he created so many plausible characters in his play, why could he not have created a wholly fictitious playwright? The date of the work is almost equally open to conjecture. The generally accepted view is that the Trivandrum play, *Charudatta in Poverty*, ascribed to Bhasa, was rewritten and enlarged at a considerably later date than Bhasa's own production, laying the foundation of the first few acts. For *The Little Clay Cart* the fifth century is at least plausible.

There seems small use in summarizing the undeniably complicated plot, whose intricacies are disclosed on a reasonably careful reading. It is helpful to realize that, in the approved manner of Sanskrit drama, each act stands aesthetically in much distinction by itself, though all constitute a grand architectural plan. It will be observed that the acts bear titles, given, as Indian custom provided, at the conclusion of each. They are, in turn: "The Deposit of the Jewel," "The Masseur Who Gambled," "The Housebreaking," "Mandanika and Sarvilaka," "The Rain," "The Exchange of Gharis," "The Escape of Aryaka," "The Murder of Vasantasena," "The Trial," and "The Dénouement." Of these it may be remarked that "The Housebreaking" contains one of the most amusing of all dramatic monologues, accompanied by a vast amount of stage business; "Mandanika and Sarvilaka," with its growing account of the hetaera's palatial home, is one of the most eloquent and artfully contrived passages of theatrical description, also animated with action; "The Rain," with its symbolic evocation of storm and desire, one of the most essentially lyrical scenes in drama; and "The Dénouement" an unsurpassed pageant-like finale. Indeed, all the scenes in the play abound in the liveliest of stage business, providing the performers with ideal passages for pantomimic acting.

The secular nature of the story and lavish ingredients of naturalism have rendered the play for Western readers essentially one of the most easily intelligible of all Sanskrit works. Mythology raises no barriers, as are often presented in plays based on the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*, and there is virtually no mysticism. For such readers the scene has exotic charm without foreignness or mystification. Basically, the chief characters are types close to those found in plays by Plautus or Terence, as the noble prostitute, the generous young man, the dissolute aristocrat, the clever attendant, the loyal wife, the well-meaning but deluded judge. Yet the Latin playwrights seem parsimonious beside the opulent Sudraka. The massive comedies by Ben Jonson come from a technical point of view much closer to *The Little Clay Cart*, as witness *Every Man Out of His Humor*, *Volpone*, and *Bartholomew Fair*. Nevertheless Jonson's mood is much more satirical than Sudraka's and while the Jacobean has more Juvenalian harshness, the Indian has more Aristophanic poetry and romantic glow, more colour and warmth. Besides him many of the chief masters of Western comedy appear slight. *The Little Clay Cart* may well be the chariot in which Sanskrit dramatic genius travels farthest through the world. What is lacking here in terms of the symbolical profundity of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti is recompensed, as Indian critics are themselves fond of observing, by a humanity virtually Shakespearian.



# *The Little Clay Cart*

## *Dramatis Personae*

### IN THE PROLOGUE

The Performer Who Recites the Invocation  
The Director of the Theatre  
An Actress

### IN THE PLAY

CHARUDATTA, a young Brahmana  
MAITREYA, an indigent Brahmana, friend to Charudatta  
SAMSTHANAKA, brother of one of King Palaka's concubines  
ARYAKA, exiled prince whose father, King Gopala, abdicated  
    in favor of Aryaka's uncle, Palaka  
SARVILAKA, "by birth a Brahmana, by profession a thief"  
DARDURAKA, friend to Sarvilaka  
CHANDANAKA, captain of the civil guard, friend to Sarvilaka  
VIRAKA, captain of the civil guard  
*A Vita*, in the service of Samsthanaka  
*A Vita*, in the service of Vasantasena  
*A Masseur*, later a Buddhist friar  
MATHURA, proprietor of a gambling-house  
A Gambler  
A Presiding Judge  
Provost of the Merchants  
A Bailiff  
A Scribe  
ROHASENA, a child, son of Charudatta  
BANDHULAS, in the service of Vasantasena  
AHINTA and GOHA, two Chandalas, executioners  
STHAVARAKA, a slave to Samsthanaka  
VARDHAMANAKA, a slave to Charudatta  
KARNAPURAKA, a slave to Vasantasena  
KUMBHILAKA, a slave to Vasantasena

VASANTASENA, an hetaera

MADANIKA, a slave and confidant to Vasantasena

The Wife of Charudatta

The Mother of Vasantasena

RADANIKA, a slave to Charudatta

### *Scene*

The city of Ujjayini, capital of the Empire of Avanti

### PROLOGUE

#### *Invocation*

May the Blessed One protect you by his deep meditation on Brahma—meditation which produces absorption into the Universal Soul by means of Vision in the Void:—the Blessed One, He whose knees are entwined by the coils of the serpent which his legs, crossed beneath his body, compress and hold fast ; He whose senses, subdued by Perfect Wisdom, are held in abeyance because he has, by pure volition, ceased to breathe ; He who, contemplating Ultimate Truth, beholds his soul liberated from the phenomenal world and merged in the All.

Yes,

May the throat of the Indigo-Throated protect you—the throat that is like a dark cloud and about which gleam like lightning-flashes the vine-like arms of Gauri !

THE DIRECTOR OF THE THEATRE Enough of this verbiage which tires the patience of the audience ! Now, having saluted this honourable and erudite assembly, I announce that we have decided to present a drama entitled *The Little Clay Cart*. As for the poet who composed it,

He was renowned under the name of Sudraka ; he had the dignity of an elephant, the eye of a chakora, a face like the full moon, and a body harmoniously proportioned ; he was the most distinguished of all men of the

superior castes, and the profundity of his wisdom was unfathomable.

Indeed,

He knew the Rig-veda, the Sama-veda, mathematics, the science of erotics, and the art of training elephants. By the grace of Siva, the veil of ignorance was lifted from Sudraka's eyes, so that after he had witnessed the coronation of his son and had performed the incomparable Horse-Sacrifice, he, having attained the incomparable age of one hundred years and ten days, cast himself into the flames.

Moreover,

Sudraka was a monarch valiant in war, yet endowed with great prudence. He excelled all those who are learned in the Vedas ; he attained great merit by his austerities ; and, in battle, he delighted in assailing with his own arm the elephant on which his enemy was mounted.

In this drama which he composed, you will behold

A young man named Charudatta who dwells in the capital of Avanti and who, though a Brahmana and the son of a merchant prince, is now impoverished ; and Vasantasena, a hetaera lovely as the springtide, who is captivated by the young man's character.

Now, by means of these two personages, King Sudraka has exhibited the joys of honourable love, the practical applications of wisdom, the perils which are engendered by litigation, the perversity of the wicked, and the ineluctability of the decrees of Destiny.

(*He walks up and down, looking about him.*) But the stage is vacant ! Where have the actors gone ? (*He ponders a moment.*) Ah yes, now I remember that

"Empty is the home of the man who is childless , and empty is the house of the man who has no faithful friends.

To the eye of a madman all the horizon is empty ; but the whole world is empty for the pauper."

My declamation is ended. This prolonged discourse has made me so hungry that my eyes are about to burst from my head and my eyeballs will soon fall to the ground, crackling like lotus-pods that have been parched by the scorching rays of the mid-summer sun. So now I will call my

wife and ask her if there isn't something for luncheon. Hello there! Here I am—but it is easier, and more suitable to express myself in the vulgar tongue. Oh dear, oh dear! I have spoken so much and I am so hungry that my limbs are as weak as the dried stems of a withered lotus. Well, let's go home and see if my wife has anything prepared. (*He walks about, looking round.*)

Here's my house; let's go in. (*Entering, he looks about.*) Wait, wait! What on earth is wrong here? Something extraordinary is happening in my house! A river of water in which rice has been boiled is flowing out into the street, and the floor is stained dark where copper butter-bowls have been moved about; this places upon my house a peculiar insigne, so that it looks like a young girl who has just stained her forehead with powdered sandal. Stimulated by these delicious odours, I am really cruelly tormented by hunger. Can it be that someone has discovered hidden treasure in my house? Or is it only my raging appetite which makes me see this profusion of comestibles?

Oh, I am so tortured by hunger that I am about to give up the ghost: is there nothing to eat in this house? But everything seems so changed; something extraordinary is happening here! That woman over there is preparing a perfumed ointment; the other one is weaving garlands of flowers. (*considering*) Well, whatever it is, I am going to call my wife and learn the truth. (*He turns towards the back of the stage.*) Madame, please come here!

AN ACTRESS (*entering*). Here I am, master

DIRECTOR. You are certainly welcome, madame.

ACTRESS. What are your orders, sir? Command and I shall obey.

DIRECTOR. Madame, I have spoken so much that I am so hungry that my limbs are as weak as the dried stems of a withered lotus. Is there anything to eat here? Yes or no!

ACTRESS. There's everything, sir.

DIRECTOR. Really! And what, for example?

ACTRESS. Oh, anything: sweetened rice, fresh butter, the curds of cream, whole rice; you have awaiting you, sir, dishes as savorous as the elixir of immortality. May the Gods so fulfill all your wishes!

DIRECTOR. What ? Are all those things here—or are you trying to have a jest at my expense ?

ACTRESS (to herself). Of course I'll have my jest ! (*aloud*) Here ? Oh no, sir ; they are down in the market place.

DIRECTOR (*angered*). You slut ! May all your hopes encounter similar disappointment ! You will be blotted out ! You dashed down my expectations after making them soar like a wisp of grass that is caught up by the wind.

ACTRESS. Be calm, sir, forgive me ; I spoke facetiously.

DIRECTOR. But tell me, what is the meaning of these extraordinary preparations ? One woman is compounding a perfumed ointment ; another is weaving garlands of flowers ; and the floor is strewn with an oblation of flowers of five different colours.

ACTRESS. Sir, we are observing a fast.

DIRECTOR. A fast ? For what purpose ?

ACTRESS. To obtain a good husband.

DIRECTOR. In this world, madame, or the next ?

ACTRESS. In the next, sir.

DIRECTOR (*wrathfully*). Do you see this, gentlemen of the audience, do you see this ? She is going to find a husband in the next world at the expense of my stomach !

ACTRESS. Come, sir, don't be angry with me. If I fast, it is merely to make certain that in other lives I shall have no other husband than you

DIRECTOR. But who suggested this fasting ?

ACTRESS. Your intimate and honourable friend Jurnavriddha.

DIRECTOR (*angrily*). O Jurnavriddha, you son of a slut ! When, Oh, when will I see the day on which the ill-tempered King Palaka will have you bound up like the fragrant tresses of a young bride ?

ACTRESS. Please, sir, don't be angry. I am observing this fast only that I may have you as husband in the next world. (*She drops to the floor at his feet.*)

DIRECTOR. Get up, madame, and tell me who should preside over this ceremony

ACTRESS. We must invite a Brahman whose station in life is about equal to our own.

DIRECTOR. Very well.\* Return to your preparations while I go to invite such a Brahmana.

ACTRESS. I obey, master. (*Exit.*)

DIRECTOR (*walking about*). Ah, me ! How can I find in this prosperous city of Ujjayini a Brahmana whose fortune is equal to my own ? (*looking around*) Here, opportunely, comes Maitreya, the friend of Charudatta. I'll invite him ! Maitreya, do me the honour of being today my principal guest.

A VOICE (*offstage*). Sir, please invite some other Brahmana. I am engaged at the present time.

DIRECTOR. But, sir, a banquet has been prepared— a banquet where you will have no rivals. Moreover, you will receive gifts.

VOICE (*offstage*). I gave you my reply the first time. Why do you persist in following me around ?

DIRECTOR. He spurns my invitation ! Well, I shall find another Brahmana (*Exit.*)

## ACT ONE

(*Enter Maitreya, carrying a cloak.*)

MAITREYA. "Please invite some other Brahmana," I said, "I am engaged at the present time !" But just the same; Maitreya, you know you have to go about looking for dinner invitations !—Alas ! How miserable my life has become ! In the days of Charudatta's prosperity I pampered myself with the delicacies that his servants laboured day and night to prepare—spiced delicacies that scented my breath. Ah, in those days I used to sit on the terrace of this house, surrounded by hundreds of choice dishes, and, like a painter amid his colour-pots, I dipped into each in turn and then pushed them away. Like a bull set free in a city square. I gorged myself contentedly. But now Charudatta's poverty compels me to forage hither and yon—yet always do I return here for shelter, like a pigeon to its dovecot.

I have in my hand a cloak for the noble Charudatta. Perfumed with jasmine, it is sent him by his dear friend Jurnavridhha, who told me to give it to him as soon as he has finished his religious exercises. I shall go to look for

Charudatta. (*He advances, looking about him.*) There he comes now ! he has completed his devotions and is scattering an offering to the household gods.

(*Charudatta enters, scattering the offerings ; he is followed by Radanika.*)

CHARUDATTA (*raising his eyes disconsolately and sighing*).

In bygone days the swans and innumerable cranes instantly devoured the offerings which I strewed over the terrace of my house ; but now the handful of poor grain that I scatter about falls unheeded into the tangled grass and the worms slaver it.

(*He walks slowly up and down, then seats himself.*)

MAITREYA. Here is the noble Charudatta. I shall greet him.

(*approaching*) Sir, I salute you and wish you happiness.

CHARUDATTA. Ah ! Here is my constant friend, Maitreya.

You are welcome, my friend ; sit down.

MAITREYA. I obey you, sir. (*He seats himself.*) Here is a cloak made fragrant with jasmine flowers sent to you by your dear friend Jurnavriiddha. He bade me give it to you as soon as you had finished your devotions. (*He holds out the cloak.*)

(*Charudatta accepts the gift and remains pensive* )

MAITREYA. On what subject do you meditate ?

CHARUDATTA. My friend,

The prosperity that follows misfortune is like a torch that bursts into flame in the depths of a rayless night. But the man whose affluence ends in destitution should be numbered with the dead, even though his corpse still breathes.

MAITREYA. Which would you prefer, death or poverty ?

CHARUDATTA. My friend,

Were it mine to choose, I should not hesitate. Death is far better than penury : in dying one endures but a moment of pain, but when a man is poor, he knows no moment of respite from suffering.

MAITREYA. Do not so distress yourself, my friend. The wealth which you lavished on your friends was depleted like the orb of the moon that yields its nectar to the hosts of heaven ; like the renascent moon, the present state of your fortune is both honourable and auspicious.

CHARUDATTA. My friend, in truth I do not mourn for my lost riches.

My sorrow is caused by the fact that guests avoid my impoverished domicile, as vagrant bees wander away from the head of an elephant when the season of rut is over and the thick liquid which oozed from the temples has evaporated away.

MAITREYA. The misbegotten creatures ! They dined on your money, my friend, and then ran away, like cowherds in the wilderness who dread the poisonous weeds and rove hither and yon, ever in search of fresh pastures.

CHARUDATTA. My friend,

Assuredly my dejection springs not from the mere loss of material possessions, for riches come and go as turns the wheel of Destiny ; nay, what pains me is that friends desert the man whose sometime wealth has taken flight.

And more than that,

Poverty makes a man timid ; and timidity destroys self-confidence. And when a man has lost assurance, he finds himself scorned ; and from humiliation is born despair. Then despair stuns and enfeebles the mind ; and a torpid mind can but await utter ruin. Alas ! Poverty is the source of all evil.

MAITREYA. Put away the sorrowful memory of the friends who feasted on your fortune.

CHARUDATTA. Poverty, my friend, is for man

An unfailing source of afflictions. It exposes him to the insolence of his enemies and makes him the enemy of all mankind ; it makes his friends despise him, and his servants hate him ; and it fills him, who reads contempt in his wife's eyes, with desire to flee to the solitude of the forest. It places within the heart a flame of sorrow that tortures but does not kill.

But I have made my offering to the household gods, and now I suggest that you, in turn, at some cross-roads, make an offering to the Divine Mothers.

MAITREYA. Certainly not !

CHARUDATTA. Why not ?

MAITREYA. Because homage paid to the gods is fruitless, and does not render them more propitious. Why, then, should



we waste worship on them ?

CHARUDATTA. Do not say that, my friend. The offering is one of the religious observances which must be performed regularly by the mature man.

For the Divine Powers are ever pleased when men who have subdued their sensual appetites regularly render homage with austerities, with thought, with words, and with oblations : this cannot be doubted.

So go, now, and make your offering to the Divine Mothers. MAITREYA. No, I shall not go. Send whomever you wish ; but for me all of the duties which I, as a Brahmana, should fulfill, are transformed and inverted, even as an image reflected in a mirror is reversed so that the right becomes sinister, and vice versa. Moreover, at this late hour of the evening the royal highway is frequented by hetaerae, by vintas, by slaves, and by noblemen ; and I would resemble the mouse who, while stalking frogs, fell into the maw of a black snake. But what are you going to do, seated out here ?

CHARUDATTA. Very well, stay here then. I am going to devote myself to pious meditations.

VOICES (*offstage*). Stop, Vasantasena ! Stop !

(*Enter Vasantasena, pursued by the Vita, Samsthanaka, and a Slave.*)

VITA. Stop ! Vasantasena ! Stop !

Why does fear thus transform your youthful charms ?

Why do you thus hasten the movement of those delicate feet that are accustomed to mark the rhythm of the dance ?

Why do you flee, casting from side to side tremulous glances from the corners of your eyes, like a gazelle that is distraught by the pursuit of huntsmen ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Stop ! Vasantasena ? Stop !

Why dost thou flee, dost thou escape, dost thou run reeling ? Be not afraid, young beauty, no one is going to kill you. Stop—if only for a moment ! The flames of Love torment me, so that my poor heart is like a piece of meat that has fallen on glowing coals.

SLAVE. Stop, lady ! Stop !

Why do you flee before us terror-stricken like a female peacock in the summer-time when her long tail displays all

its riches ? As for the mighty lord, my master, he bounds forward like a young dog that ranges through the forest.

VITA. Stop ! Vasantasena ! Stop !

Why do you flee trembling like a slender banana-tree under your scarlet tunic whose edges flutter in the breeze ? You are brighter than minium newly-mined, and in your flights petals like crimson drops fall from your garlands of red lotus.

SAMSTHANAKA. Stop ! Vasantasena ! Stop !

You have raised to frenzy my love, my passion, and my ardor ! During the night you drive sleep away from the couch on which I should repose. Though you flee from me, your terror makes you stumble and stagger, so that you must fall into my power, even a Kunti was captured by Ravana.

VITA. O. Vasantasena !

Why, surpassing my speed with thy own, dost thou flee like a snake that fears the king of birds ? Were I to exert myself, I could outstrip the fleet wind itself ; I do not strain myself to seize thee, O fair-limbed girl !

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor ! Mentor !

I called her the whip of lust that is wickled by Kama, who robs men of their money ; I called her a nymphomaniac . I called her a dancing girl ; I called her a noseless creature ; I called her a woman who has ruined her family , I called her an ungoverned female ; I called her the treasure-chest of Kama ; I called her the hostess of a brothel ; I called her a frame on which beautiful ornaments are hung ; I called her a graceful harlot ; I called her a prostitute. And yet, though I have invoked her by these ten appellations, she will have nothing to do with me !

VITA. Why do you flee in terror like a female heron that quakes at the sound of thunder rumbling through the clouds ? Why do you, who are like a lute that is plucked by the hand of a vita, rush madly on, so that your cheeks are scourged by your pendant ear-rings ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Why dost thou flee with bracelets and ornaments musically tinkling, like Draupadi fleeing from Rama ? But soon I shall overcome you with violence,

even as Hanuman seized Subhadra, the sister of Visvavasu !

SLAVE. Open your arms to the friend of the king and you will enjoy loin and tender meat. Dogs that are provided with fresh flesh do not go hunting carrion.

VITA. Mistress Vasantasena !

Why do you flee so precipitously and panic-stricken, while the jewelled girdle about your hips chimes musically and glitters like stars, and your face, like that of tutelary goddess, streams with crushed and scented realgar ?

SMASTHANAKA. We pursue you as ardently as dogs give chase to a female jackal in the forest ; but you flee swiftly, rapidly, madly, carrying with you my heart and all its surrounding integuments.

VASANTASENA. Pallavaka ! Pallavaka ! Parabhritika ! Parabhritika !

SAMSTHANAKA (*frightened*). Mentor ! Mentor ! A man is coming ! A man !

VITA. Don't be afraid ; there's no danger.

VASANTASENA. Madhavika ! Madhavika !

VITA (*laughing*). You simpleton, she is calling her attendants.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor ! Is she calling a woman ?

VITA. Yes, of course.

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, only a woman ! Why, I could slay a hundred of them ! Am I not a bold-hearted warrior ?

VASANTASENA (*seeing that none of her servants come*). Alas ! My attendants have fled ! If I am to escape, I must rely on myself only.

VITA. Look for her carefully.

SAMSTHANAKA. O Vasantasena ! Call, if you wish—call upon the kokila, call upon the buds, call upon even the spring itself ! No one can save you from my pursuit.

Not even Bhimasena, nor the son of Jamadagni, nor the son of Kunti, nor the Ten-Headed One ! I shall be like Duhsasana : I shall seize you by your long tresses.

Then you'll see what happens to you !

A swing of my noble sword and off with your head ! It is keen edged and will hew through your throat or hurl you from this life into the Beyond. So what's the use of running away ? You will not live when you are dead !

VASANTASENA. Sir, I am only a defenceless woman.

VITA. That is why we spare your life.

SAMSTHANAKA. Ycs, that's why we haven't murdered you.

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). Oh ! He terrifies me when he tries to reassure me ! Well, there is no help for it. This is what I had better say. (*aloud*) Sirs, what do you demand of me ? Is it my jewels that you seek ?

VITA. May the gods preserve us from such crime, lady Vasantasena ! Would it not be shameful to uproot the vine-flowers that deck a lovely garden ? We do not want your jewels.

VASANTASENA. What, then, do you want ?

SAMSTHANAKA. That you open your arms to me, to me who am more than a mortal man—to me who am another Vasudeva !

VASANTASENA (*angrily*) Away ! Leave me ! You demand a thing that I abhor !

SAMSTHANAKA (*laughing and clapping his hands*). Mentor, mentor ! Did you hear that ? In the twinkling of an eye this courtesan has become so amiable that she says, "You stand here weary and footsore." But don't think, my pretty one, that I have just walked from a distant town or city. No, no ! I swear by the head of the vita here and by my own feet that it was only in following your feet, lady, that I became weary and exhausted.

VITA (*to himself*). The imbecile ! She said "abhor" and he understood "footsore" ! (*aloud*) Vasantasena, your words are not in accord with the character of a courtesan. Do you not know that

Her home is the hospitable refuge of all youth, and that she is like a flower that blooms at the side of the highway ? Your body, your caresses, are merchandise that may be bought with gold ; you should, therefore, sell to all alike, and open your arms with equal abandon to the man who pleases you and to him who displeases you.

Moreover :

The wise Brahmana and the idiot pariah bathe in the same lake ; the flowering shrub bends beneath the crow as readily as beneath the peacock ; the ship that carries the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, and the Vaisya, bears with equal security ignoble men. Are you not the lake, the

shrub, and the ship? You are a courtesan, and must minister to every man's desire.

VASANTASENA. It is courtesy, not violence, that arouses love.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor! This fruit of a slave's womb itches for a poverty-stricken lout called Charudatta whom she saw in the gardens of the temple of Kama, so she will have nothing to do with me. Charudatta's house, by the way, is just over there to the left, so be careful that she doesn't escape from us.

VITA (*to himself*). This fool always blurts out what he should conceal! Oh, so Vasantasena has fallen in love with the worthy Charudatta! That confirms the proverb, "Pearls go with pearls." Let's let matters take their course I've had enough of this idiot. (*aloud*) Bastard, did you say that Charudatta's house is over here on the left?

SAMSTHANAKA. That's just what I said. It's right there on the left!

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). What? Charudatta's house is here on the left! Really, this scoundrel, in seeking to harm me, has made it possible to see the man I love.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor! The night is very dark. I saw Vasantasena and now I can't see her. She is like a pellet of ink in a bowl of black beans.

VITA. Truly the darkness lies heavily about us, and

My eyes, though strained wide open and though endowed with extraordinary keenness of vision, are as powerless as though they were sealed with shadows and smitten with blindness.

Indeed,

Like a viscid liquid, the darkness anoints all my limbs ;  
from the sky it rains down upon us, like a black collyrium,  
My eyes have become useless as a favour done to an ingrate man.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor! I am trying to find Vasantasena!

VITA. Are there no clues which could aid you in tracking her, bastard?

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor! What do you mean?

VITA. I refer to the chiming of her ornaments and to the perfume exhaled by her garlands of flowers.

SAMSTHANAKA. I hear the perfume of the garlands of flowers, but I do not see clearly the chiming of her ornaments because the darkness blinds my nostrils.

VITA (*aside*). Vasantasena,

The darkness of the night conceals you from the eyes, so that you are like a lightning flash that has vanished in the depths of the clouded heavens ; but the fragrance exhaled by your garlands, and the tinkling bracelets about your ankles, may betray you.

Do you hear me, Vasantasena ?

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). I hear and understand. (*Having removed her garlands and her bracelets, she gropes her way forward.*) Feeling my way along the wall, I have found the side door. But alas ! I find that it is locked.

CHARUDATTA. My friend, my silent prayers are finished. Go now and make an offering to the Divine Mothers.

MAITREYA. No, no ! I will not go.

CHARUDATTA. Alas !

When you are poor, your kinsmen disregard your words, your dearest friends avoid you, adversity grows apace, the spirit withers away, the pure lustre of your honour is overcast, and people impute to you even the evil that is done by others.

Nay, moreover,

No one seeks your company, no one shows any consideration.

If you attend a banquet at the home of a rich man, you are greeted with disdain. You are poorly dressed and, ashamed of yourself, you avoid the public gaze. I have learned that poverty is truly the sixth of mortal sins.

Nay, moreover,

I deplore your fate, O Poverty for I wonder where you, who have found in me so hospitable a host, will go for refuge when my afflicted body breathes no more.

MAITREYA (*ill at ease*). Very well, then, my friend. If I must go, let Radanika accompany me.

CHARUDATTA. Radanika, go with Maitreya.

RADANIKA. I obey you, master.

MAITREYA. Take the offering and the lamp, Radanika. I shall open the side door. (*He does so.*)

VASANTASENA. Look ! The door opens as though to welcome me. I shall go in at once. (*She sees the lamp.*) Oh, a light ! (*She extinguishes it with her tunic, and enters.*)

CHARUDATTA. What is the matter, Maitreya ?

MAITREYA. When I opened the door, a gust of wind came in and blew out the lamp. Radanika, go out through the side door, while I go back into the house to light the lamp. I shall return in a moment. (*Exit.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor ! I am looking for Vasantasena !

VITA. Go ahead ! Look for her !

SAMSTHANAKA (*having sought about*). Mentor, mentor ! I've got her ! I've got her !

VITA. You idiot ! It is I !

SAMSTHANAKA. Out of the way, then ! And stay there ! (*Groping about, he seizes his Slave.*) Now I've got her, mentor ! Now I've got her !

SLAVE. Master, it is I, your slave.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, you stay there. Slave, you stay there.

So here is the mentor and there is the slave ; here is the slave and there is the mentor. Now, both of you, stay where you are ! (*Groping about once more, he encounters Radanika and seizes her by her hair.*) Mentor, mentor ! This time I've got her, I've got her ! I've caught Vasantasena !

I tracked her down in the darkness ! The perfume of her garments betrayed her, and I caught her by her long tresses, even as Draupadi was caught by Chanakya.

VITA. You would, with youthful audacity, go seeking a well-born young man, while your long tresses, which are worthy of the finest jewels, were garlanded with fragrant flowers. By that long hair you are trapped at last !

SAMSTHANAKA. Fair one, it is useless for you to scream and weep and call upon the Fierce God, upon the Blesséd One, upon Siva, upon the Giver of Happiness, or upon the Great Lord. You are caught by your head, by your hair, by your locks, by your tresses.

RADANIKA (*terrified*). Sire, what do you intend to do with me ?

VITA. That is not her voice, you bastard.

SAMSTHANAKA. But mentor, don't you see that this slave's

daughter has changed her tone, like a cat that begs for curds of cream ?

VITA. What ? Changed her voice ? Astonishing ! But, after all, it may be She has acted on the stage ; she has mastered all the fine arts ; she knows every method of disguise and deceit. She may thus have acquired the ability to imitate another's voice. (*Enter Maitreya.*)

MAITREYA. Strange ! The flame of my lamp trembles in the evening wind like the heart of a goat that is being dragged to the sacrifice.

(*Advancing, he sees Radanika.*) Here, Radanika !

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor ! A man is coming ! A man !

MAITREYA. Is it just, is it lawful, that strangers, presuming upon his poverty, should thus trespass upon the domain of the noble Charudatta ?

RADANIKA. Master Maitreya, you see how I am abused.

MAITREYA. You ? Or both of us ?

RADANIKA. Well, not you alone !

MAITREYA. Have they mistreated you ?

RADANIKA. I should say so !

MAITREYA. Truly ?

RADANIKA. Truly !

MAITREYA (*angry, and flourishing his staff*). Enough of this ! Even a dog is master of his own hovel ; how much more so, a Brahmana ! With this staff, gnarled as the fate of persons like me, I'll split the head of this insolent creature like a dry bamboo !

VITA. Come now, noble Brahmana, forgive us !

MAITREYA (*glancing at the Vna*). He is not the culprit. (*He sees Samsthanaka.*) Here is the guilty one ! You, Samsthanaka, you, the brother-in-law of the king ! You scoundrel, you rascal, is this how you behave ? Though the noble Charudatta be poor, his virtues are none the less the ornament of Ujjayini. So you trespass upon his property and mishandle his servant girl !

Never despise a poor man, for, whatever the name given to him, it is not he, but rather the rich man who has lost his virtue, who is a pauper in the eyes of God.

VITA (*perturbed*). Forgive us, noble Brahmana, forgive us !



All this is merely the result of a mistake ; no insult was intended. You see,

Impelled by amorous desire, we were chasing a woman—

MAITREYA. This one ?

VITA. God forbid !

—a young, unchaste woman. She disappeared ; while searching, we mistook this woman for her. Thus was brought about the misdeed which we seemed to commit intentionally.

Accept this proof of our desire to make amends. (*He casts away his sword and, falling to his knees before Maitreya, raises his clasped hands.*)

MAITREYA. You are an honourable man. Rise, rise ! Not knowing you, I spoke to you sharply, but now that I know you better, I ask your pardon.

VITA. For what ? It is for you to forgive ! I shall rise only on one condition.

MAITREYA. Name it.

VITA. That you say nothing to the noble Charudatta about this affair.

MAITREYA. I promise.

VITA. Respectfully, sir, do I receive the marks of consideration which you bestow upon me. Though we are men of the sword, you have triumphed over us with the sword of your virtues.

SAMSTHANAKA (*annoyed*). Why, mentor, did you throw yourself at the feet of that clown, and clasp your hands, as though you were praying to him ?

VITA. I was afraid.

SAMSTHANAKA. Of what ?

VITA. Of the virtues of the noble Charudatta.

SAMSTHANAKA. Of what virtue is a man in whose house guests find nothing to eat ?

VITA. How can you ask ?

It was by his generosity toward people like me that he ruined himself. Never did he use his wealth to humiliate anyone. He exhausted himself as, in the sultry season, a well runs dry by quenching the thirst of men.

SAMSTHANAKA (*vexed*). He ! That son of a slave ! Who is he ? Is he a mighty man ? Is he Svetaketu, the Pandava ? Is

he Ravana, the son of Radha ? Or Indradatta ? Is he any one of the sons which Rama begot upon Kunti : Asvatthaman, Yudhishtira, or Jatayu ?

VITA. Are you mad ? I speak of the noble Charudatta, who is A tree that gives bountifully to all who are in need, that is bent down by the weight of its fruits, his virtues. He is a fatherly protector to all honest men ; a mirror for the sage ; a touchstone of honour ; an ocean of all the rivers of integrity ; a benefactor exempt from vanity ; a treasure of manly righteousness ; the culmination of courtesy and nobility. He lives practicing the virtues which we praise ; other men merely breathe.

Let us depart !

SAMSTHANAKA. Without having taken Vasantasena ?

VITA. She has vanished.

SAMSTHANAKA. How ?

VITA. Like the sight of the blind, like the vigour of the sick, like the reason of the madman, like the prosperity of the sluggard, like the wisdom of a thoughtless and profligate scoundrel. At your coming,

she was eclipsed, like love at the sight of an enemy.

SAMSTHANAKA. I will not budge from here until I have seized Vasantasena !

VITA. Have you never learned that

One tames an elephant by chaining him to a post ; one controls a horse by means of a bridle ; one takes a woman by means of her heart ? If you cannot do this, nothing remains but to go away.

SAMSTHANAKA. Go, if you wish ; I remain here

VITA. Very well, I am going. (*Exit*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, the master has masterfully vanished. (*He turns to Maitreya.*) As for you, you bald-headed rogue, you miscreant, sit down, sit down !

MAITREYA. Already have we been set down.

SAMSTHANAKA. By whom ?

MAITREYA. By Destiny.

SAMSTHANAKA. Then arise, arise !

MAITREYA. We shall arise.

SAMSTHANAKA. When ?

MAITREYA. When Fate favours us once more

SAMSTHANAKA. Go ahead then and weep !

MAITREYA. Already have we been compelled to weep.

SAMSTHANAKA. By whom ?

MAITREYA. By adversity.

SAMSTHANAKA. Well then, laugh, laugh !

MAITREYA. We shall laugh.

SAMSTHANAKA. When ?

MAITREYA. When prosperity has returned to the noble Charudatta.

SAMSTHANAKA. Bah ! Wretched clown, be off and tell the pauper called Charudatta that an hetaira named Vasantasena, covered with golden ornaments and brilliant jewels, like a leading lady at the première of a new play, has been in love with him ever since she saw him in the gardens of the temple of Kama ; and that now, just as we were about to overcome her with violence, she has escaped into his house.

If he consents to deliver her into my hands immediately and without a lawsuit, I shall be grateful for his prompt obedience, and I shall reward him with my friendship ; if, on the other hand, he should refuse, I shall swear against him undying hatred. Moreover, let him remember that

These things never decay : the gourd whose neck has been packed in dung, dried beans, pickled meat, the stew that is cooked on a winter evening, debts, and enmity.

You will speak emphatically, tersely, and in such a way that you can be heard from the place where I shall be seated, the balustraded dovecot of my palace. And if you fail so to announce, I shall crack your head like a wood-apple that is caught between a door and the sill.

MAITREYA. Don't worry ; I shall bear your message.

SAMSTHANAKA (*aside*). Tell me, slave, has the mentor really gone ?

SLAVE. Absolutely !

SAMSTHANAKA. If that's the case, let's get out of here at once.

SLAVE. Master, you have forgotten your sword.

SAMSTHANAKA. Carry it yourself.

SLAVE. No, master. Here it is—should not the master carry the sword ?

SAMSTHANAKA (*grasping the inverted sword*). Now, having taken upon my shoulder my barkless sword that is like

a red radish asleep in its sheath, I wend my way homeward,  
pursued by the howling of dogs and bitches, like a jackal  
that flees towards its lair.

*(Exeunt Samsthanaka and his Slave.)*

MAITREYA. Good Radanika, you must be careful not to let  
your master, Charudatta, know of the mistreatment you  
suffered tonight. It would, I am sure, augment the dejection  
that is caused by his poverty.

RADANIKA. Master Maitreya, you know I am Radanika, and  
I can hold my tongue.

MAITREYA. Very good.

CHARUDATTA *(to Vasantasena)*. Radanika, it is evening, the  
hour when the wind rises. Rohasena must be cold ; take  
him into the house and put this cloak about him. *(He holds  
out the cloak.)*

VASANTASENA *(to herself)*. He mistakes me for his servant-girl !  
*(She takes the cloak, breathes its fragrance, and speaks delighted-  
ly to herself.)* Ah, this cloak, perfumed with jasmine, proves  
that Charudatta is not indifferent to the pleasures of youth.  
*(Unobserved by Charudatta, she dons the garment.)*

CHARUDATTA. Go on, Radanika ; take Rohasena and enter  
the house.

VASANTASENA *(to herself)*. Alas ! It is your heart that I would  
enter !

CHARUDATTA. What, Radanika ? You don't answer me ?  
Alas !

When once the merciless hand of Destiny has cast a man  
into misery, and he suffers all the sorrows of vanished  
wealth, his friends become enemies, and the attendants  
who were long devoted to him change their sentiments.

MAITREYA *(advancing, accompanied by Radanika)*. My friend,  
here is Radanika.

CHARUDATTA. Radanika ? Who, then, is this other woman,  
She whom I unwittingly desecrated with the touch of my  
garment ?

VASANTASENA *(to herself)*. Say "consecrated" !

CHARUDATTA.

— She is beautiful as the crescent moon veiled by the clouds  
of autumn.

But it is not lawful so to regard the wife of another.

MAITREYA. Cease to fear that she is the wife of another. This woman is Vasantasena, who fell in love with you when she saw you in the gardens of the temple of Kama.

CHARUDATTA. What ? Vasantasena ! (*to himself*)

Since my wealth is departed, the love which I feel for her is like the rage of a coward ; it dares not emerge from the mind.

MAITREYA. My friend, the brother-in-law of the king told me to tell you . . .

CHARUDATTA. Speak !

MAITREYA. That an hetaera named Vasantasena, covered with golden ornaments and brilliant jewels like a leading lady at the première of a new play, has been in love with you ever since she saw you in the gardens of the temple of Kama ; and that, just as he was about to overcome her with violence, she escaped into your house.

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). "About to overcome her with violence," he says. In the circumstances, that's a real compliment !

MAITREYA. If you consent to deliver her into his hands immediately and without a lawsuit, he will be grateful for your prompt obedience, and will reward you with his friendship ; if, on the other hand, you refuse, he will swear against you undying hatred.

CHARUDATTA (*with contempt*). He is mad ! (*to himself*) This young woman is worthy of the homage that one accords to a goddess. For indeed,

When he besought her to enter his house, she refused to go, although she knew that Fortune has bestowed on him high position and great wealth. She is accustomed to the society of men, but yet she did not abandon herself, although he lavishly solicited her.

(*aloud*) Lady Vasantasena, not recognizing you, I unintentionally charged you with the duties of my servant girl. With bowed head, I respectfully ask you to pardon my discourtesy.

VASANTASENA. It is I, sir, who have transgressed in thus entering without permission. With bowed head, I humbly ask your pardon.

MAITREYA. Ah, your heads bow in concert like those of two beautiful fields of rice planted opposite each other. Now I shall bow my head, like the knee of a half-grown camel, and humbly beg you to lift your two heads once more. (*He bows.*)

CHARUDATTA. So be it. Let us disregard conventions.

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). How adroit and attractive is his suggestion ! But in the circumstances, it would not be seemly to spend the night in a house which I entered without invitation. This, however, I can do. (*aloud*) If, sir, you wish to grant me this much of your favour, permit me to leave these jewels in your house. It was for the sake of these jewels that marauders pursued me.

CHARUDATTA. My house is scarcely fitted to guard such a deposit.

VASANTASENA. You are mistaken, sir ; it is in men, not in houses, that one places confidence.

CHARUDATTA. Maitreya, take the jewels.

VASANTASENA. I am very grateful to you. (*She gives the jewels to Maitreya.*)

MAITREYA (*taking them*). Oh, thank you, madame !

CHARUDATTA. Blunderer ! They are left for safekeeping—

MAITREYA (*aside*). If that is the case, the thieves may come and get them, for all that I care !

CHARUDATTA.—for a few days only—

Maitreya. She leaves them as a deposit, but they become our property.

CHARUDATTA. --until I return them to her.

VASANTASENA. Sir, I wish that your friend would escort me home.

CHARUDATTA. Maitreya, please escort this lady to her house.

MAITREYA. This is for you to do : at her side you will be like a majestic swan accompanying its mate. But I, though a Brahmana, would be torn to pieces by those people, just as an offering to the gods, thrown down at some cross-roads, is devoured by the dogs.

CHARUDATTA. So be it. I myself shall accompany you, madame. Let torches be lighted that we may be secured on the royal highway !

MAITREYA. Vardhamanaka, light the torches !

VARDHAMANAKA (*aisde*). Well, how can you light torches without oil ?

MAITREYA (*aside*. So you see, my friend, the torches, like courtesans, lack spirit and will not burn for the impoverished.

CHARUDATTA. Very well, Maitreya, we shall not need them. For see,

The moon, the torch of the universal highway, rises with its train of constellations, pale as the cheek of an enamoured woman. Its soft white rays fall on the thronging shadows like drops of milk that fall on a parched marsh-land. (*He, followed by Maitreya, accompanies Vasantasena ; they walk about and, when they have arrived at the gate of Vasantasena's house, Charudatta speaks to her tenderly.*) Lady Vasantasena, we have reached your house. Do you wish to enter ? (*Vasantasena gazes at him longingly as she enters her house ; exit.*)

Friend, Vasantasena has gone into her house. Let us return to ours.

The great highway lies deserted, and the guards make their rounds, for man must ever guard against lurking evil, and the night is prolific of misdeeds.

(*He advances.*) You will guard the casket of jewels during the night, and Vardhamanaka, during the day.

MAITREYA. So be it. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Thus ends the First Act, "The Deposit of Jewels."*)

## ACT TWO

(*Enter a Slave Girl*)

SLAVE GIRL. I am sent by my mistress with a message that her mother told me to deliver. Now, to find her. (*She advances, looking about her.*) Ah, there she is, lost in reveries ! Well, I shall go up to her.

(*Vasantasena is seated, pensive, with Madanika near her.*)

VASANTASENA. Well, my girl, what then ? Continue !

MADANIKA. But my lady, we were not conversing. Why do you say, "what then ? continue."

VASANTASENA. What did I just say ?

MADANIKA. You said, "what then ? Continue !"

VASANTASENA (*surprised*). Ah, indeed ! (*The Slave Girl draws near.*)

SLAVE GIRL. My lady, your mother asks you to attend to your ablutions and then to pay your devotions to the gods.

VASANTASENA. Tell her, my girl, that I shall not take the ceremonial bath today ; let her find some Brahmana to perform the rites of devotion to the gods.

SLAVE GIRL. I obey you, mistress. (*Exit.*)

MADANIKA. My lady, it is devotion to you, not sly curiosity, which prompts me to ask what is the matter.

VASANTASENA. But what seems to be the matter with me, Madanika ?

MADANIKA. Seeing you thus distraught, my lady, I perceive that you are longing for someone of whom you are very fond.

VASANTASENA. Well surmised ! Obviously you can understand the hearts of others, Madanika.

MADANIKA. Excellent ! Welcome to Kama, the mighty god to whom youth owes its happiness ! But tell me, my lady, do your inclinations turn towards the king, or toward some courtier ?

VASANTASENA. My girl, it is a question of loving, not of playing the trade of a courtesan.

MADANIKA. Do you, then, love some young Brahmana whose mind is embellished with rare erudition ?

VASANTASENA. One should venerate Brahmanas . . .

MADANIKA. Do your affections, then, turn toward some young merchant who has gained a great fortune in travelling from city to city ?

VASANTASENA. My girl, a merchant would abandon his mistress, no matter how completely she loved him, to journey into other lands ; and this separation would cause her cruel suffering.

MADANIKA. But my lady, if the one whom you love is neither the king, nor a nobleman, nor a Brahmana, nor a merchant, then, noble mistress, who can he be ?



VASANTASENA. My girl, did you not accompany me to the gardens of the temple of Kama ?

MADANIKA. Yes, my lady.

VASANTASENA. Then why question me as though you knew nothing about it ?

MADANIKA. Oh, now I see ! Is it not the man who received you so courteously when you sought refuge in his house ?

VASANTASENA. What is his name ?

MADANIKA. Yes, he dwells in the Square of the Guilds.

VASANTASENA. I asked you his name !

MADANIKA. Yes, my lady ; his name is a good omen. He is called Charudatta.

VASANTASENA (*pleased*). Excellent, Madanika, excellent ! You are well informed.

MADANIKA (*to herself*). I certainly am ! (*aloud*) My lady, it is said that he is very poor.

VASANTASENA. That is why I love him—even though one seldom hears of a courtesan who feels love for a man who has fallen into poverty.

MADANIKA. But my lady, do the wanton bees seek the mango tree when its flowers have withered ?

VASANTASENA. That is why they are called wanton.

MADANIKA. If you love him, my lady, why do you not arrange a meeting with him at once ?

VASANTASENA. I have tried, my girl, but with little success. In the future, however, I shall encounter fewer obstacles to seeing him.

MADANIKA. That was the reason, was it not, why you left your jewels in his care ?

VASANTASENA. You have guessed correctly, my girl.

VOICES (*offstage*). Ho there, sir ! There goes a gambler who is running away without paying the ten pieces of gold that he lost ! Stop him ! Stop him ! Wretch, I can see you from here ! (*Enter a Masseur, flinging aside the curtain. He is terrified.*)

MASSEUR. Incredible ! What a misfortune to be addicted to gambling ! Ah,

Those dice kicked me like a she-mule that has been turned loose to frisk in the pasture. That last shot pierced me as Ghatotkacha was transfixed by Karna.

When I saw that the keeper of the gambling-house was occupied with a score, I hurriedly slipped away; but now that I am out here in the middle of the street, where, oh, where can I find refuge?

While the keeper of the gambling-house, accompanied by one of the players, is looking for me in another direction, I must save myself by walking backwards into that godless temple where I can play the role of God. (*Suiting gestures to words, he enters the temple and assumes the indicated posture. Enter Mathura, accompanied by a gambler.*)

MATHURA. Ho there, sir! There goes a gambler who is running away without paying the ten pieces of gold that he lost! Stop him! Stop him! Wretch, I can see you from here!

GAMBLER. You could descend into the deepest hell or climb to the side of the King of Heaven to seek refuge; not Siva himself could save you from the keeper of a gambling-house.

MATHURA. Where, where are you hiding, you thief, you who have just cheated an experienced keeper of gambling-houses, and who are trembling with fright? You who run trembling and stumbling with each step along your uneven path! O you who befoul your own name and the name of your family!

GAMBLER (*Examining the footprints*). He came thus far—but here the trail is lost.

MATHURA (*examining attentively*). Ah! Footprints which show that he walked backwards! And there's a temple in which there is no idol. (*reflecting*) The scoundrel entered it backwards!

GAMBLER. Let's look for him there.

MATHURA. Agreed! (*They enter the temple, look about, and indicate by gestures that they detect the imposture.*)

GAMBLER. Why look here! This statue is made of wood.

MATHURA. By no means! By no means! It's stone. (*He shakes the Masseur, making gestures of understanding.*)

Well, anyway, let's have a game here. (*They play at dice.*)

MASSEUR (*to himself, while striving to repress the emotions produced by a strong desire to gamble*). Alas!

The moneyless man who hears the rattle of dice feels a

sudden transport like that of a dethroned king who hears the drums beating the call to arms.

No, I shall never play again ; I am resolved, for it would be as well to throw myself from the summit of Meru as to grasp the dice. Yet their sound is as sweet as the song of the Kokila.

GAMBLER. It's my turn ! It's my turn !

MATHURA. No, no ! It's my turn ! Mine !

MASSEUR (*suddenly leaving his position and leaping forward*).

Yes, yes ! It's my turn !

GAMBLER. Our man is caught !

MATHURA (*seizing him*). Now, you scoundrel, you are caught.

Produce the ten pieces of gold.

MASSEUR. I'll give them to you today.

MATHURA. Give them to me immediately.

MASSEUR. I'll pay you all right, but don't be so violent.

MATHURA. Come on ! Pay up at once !

MASSEUR. Oh ! I am fainting ! (*He falls to the ground. They beat and kick him.*)

MATHURA. There (*drawing a circle in the dust about the fallen Masseur*), now you are trapped in the Gambler's Circle !

MASSEUR (*arising, despondently*). Oh, Oh ! I am trapped in the Gambler's Circle ! Alas ! That binds one inescapably to his obligation. Where can I find money to pay what I must pay ?

MATHURA. Well, give bail !

MASSEUR. Very well, I shall. (*taking the Gambler's hand*)

If he will let half of the debt go, I'll promise to give half of it to you.

GAMBLER. All right.

MASSEUR (*going to Mathura*). So I give you security for half my debt. Will you consider half of it paid ?

MATHURA. Very well. I see nothing wrong with that.

MASSEUR. (*loudly*). So, sir, you consider half of it paid ?

MATHURA. Yes.

MASSEUR (*to the Gambler*). And you take my promise for half of it ?

GAMBLER. Yes.

MASSEUR. I may as well go now.

MATHURA. The ten pieces of gold ! Where are you going ?

MASSEUR. Do you see, sirs, do you see? I gave one of them security for half my debt, and the other one took my promise for half of it. What more can they want from me?

MATHURA (*seizing him*). I am Mathura, the shrewd player, and I won't be played with like this! Wretch, you are going to give me every one of the gold pieces you owe—right now!

MASSEUR. Where can I find them?

MATHURA. Sell your father and pay!

MASSEUR. Where can I find my father?

MATHURA. Sell your mother and pay!

MASSEUR. Where can I find my mother?

MATHURA. Sell yourself and pay!

MASSEUR. Give me a moment's rest; then lead me to the royal highway.

MATHURA. Now!

MASSEUR. Then here we go. (*He walks about.*) Gentlemen, buy me for ten pieces of gold from this keeper of a gambling-house! (*He listens to a voice.*) What? He asks what I can do. I can do whatever there is to be done about the house. Ah, he goes away without replying. Very well, I must ask another. (*He repeats his cry.*) Ah, he too goes on his way without paying any attention to me. Alas! Since the noble Charudatta lost his fortune, I have gained only in misfortune.

MATHURA. Pay me!

MASSEUR. How can I? (*Having spoken, he falls to the ground. Mathura beats him.*) Oh, oh! Help! Help! (*Enter Darduraka.*)

DARDURAKA. Indeed, gambling is for a man a kingdom in which he lacks only a throne. For in truth

The gambler never thinks of defeat; his revenues arrive from all sides, and he spends freely from an overflowing treasury, for he, like a monarch, counts on unlimited future revenues; and he is surrounded by wealthy persons, like courtiers.

Yes,

By gambling one obtains wealth; by gambling one wins wives and friends; by gambling one wins the means of giving and of gambling; by gambling one loses everything.

Yes,

.. The three-spot took away all my possessions; the coming

of the two-spot made my blood run cold ; the ace sent me on my way ; and I return utterly ruined by the four-spot.

(*He looks about.*) Hold ! There's an old acquaintance, Mathura, the keeper of the gambling-house ! But it's too late to retreat now ; I must conceal myself. (*Having vacillated between several different impulses, he stops and contemplates his cloak.*)

This cloak is worn to the warp ; this cloak is decorated with hundreds of little holes ; this cloak can no longer be worn as a garment ; this cloak can be carried only tucked under the arm.

So after all I can trust in my own mortification ; see how austere

With one foot in the air and the other resting on the ground I hover in suspense as long as the sun floats above the horizon !

MATHURA. Pay me ! Pay me !

MASSEUR. How can I ? (*Mathura beats him.*)

DARDURAKA. Well, well, what is the matter here ? (*He listens to an imagined speech.*) What did you say ? He says that it is a gambler who is being mistreated by the owner of a gambling-house, but no one goes to his assistance. Then I, Darduraka, will go to the rescue. (*He presses forward.*) Make way ! Make way ! (*He regards the scene before him.*) Ah, ha ! It's the crafty Mathura ; and there's the masseur, that ascetically miserable man.

Why does this tall and well-formed man, who would never stand erect in forced immobility with drooping head till sunset, who would never grind earth and sand into his back to produce scars and sores, who would never let his sleek calves be torn daily by the wild dogs—why does he thus continually mortify his delicate flesh through lust for gambling ?

Nevertheless, we must appease Mathura. (*He advances.*)

I salute you, Mathura. (*Mathura returns the salutation.*)

What's the matter ?

MATHURA. He refuses to pay me ten pieces of gold.

DARDURAKA. Bah ! A mere trifle !

MATHURA (*snatching the coat which Darduraka carried under his*

*arm*). Look, gentlemen ! See the tattered coat that is worn by a man for whom ten pieces of gold are a mere trifle !  
DARDURAKA. Fool ! Have you never seen me pay ten pieces of gold on a single throw of the dice ? And when one has money—well, should one carry it in the bosom of his robe and show it to everyone ? And anyway,

You would be a contemptible scoundrel, a vile outcaste, if you murdered a man in the possession of his five senses for a mere ten pieces of gold.

MATHURA. If, sir, ten pieces of gold are a mere trifle to you, they are a fortune to me.

DARDURAKA. Well, if you feel that way about it, here's the solution : lend him ten pieces of gold and let him play the game again.

MATHURA. And what then ?

DARDURAKA. If he wins, he will pay you.

MATHURA. And if he loses ?

DARDURAKA. In that case, he will not pay you.

MATHURA. It will do no good to babble. You rogue who give me such good advice, act upon it yourself. As for me, I am called Mathura the crafty ; I know how to trick and I know the tricks of others—yours, for example, you rake !

DARDURAKA. Who is a rake ?

MATHURA. You are a rake !

DARDURAKA. Clearly it was your father who was a whore-monger ! (*He signals to the Masseur to make his escape*.)

MATHURA. You son of a whore, that's the way you gamble, isn't it ?

DARDURAKA. What do you mean, gamble ?

MATHURA. Come on, masseur, give me ten pieces of gold !

MASSEUR. I'll give them to you today. I promise I'll give them to you ! (*Mathura beats him.*)

DARDURAKA. Fool, if I were not here, you might thrash him—but not while I am here ! (*Mathura has seized the Masseur and drives his fist against the latter's nose ; the Masseur, bleeding, falls to the ground unconscious ; Darduraka interposes, is struck by Mathura, and strikes back.*)

MATHURA. Oh, oh ! You excrement ! You filthy strumpet's bastard ! You'll get what you deserve !

DARDURAKA. You dolt ! So you will assault a peaceful specta-

tor, will you ? Touch me again, and tomorrow before the king's tribunal I'll make you see a few things.

MATHURA. I'll see, right enough !

DARDURAKA. How will you see ?

MATHURA (*staring with open eyes*). I'll see like this !

(*Darduraka hurls a handful of dust into Mathura's eyes and signals to the Masseur to flee. Mathura, whose eyes are filled with dust, stumbles and falls. The Masseur makes his escape.*)

DARDURAKA (*to himself*). Now that I have made an enemy of Mathura, who owns the best gambling-house in town, it would not be prudent to remain here. My dear friend Sarvilaka tells me that, according to a prophecy made by an inspired sage, Gopala's son, Aryaka, is destined to become king. Around him are gathered all men of our condition. I think I had best follow the same course and join them. (*Exit.*)

MASSEUR (*advances trembling and looks about him.*) There's a house whose side door is left open. No matter who the owner may be, I must enter. (*He enters and sees Vasantasena.*) Noble lady, I seek protection.

VASANTASENA. My protection is granted to whosoever asks for it. Girl, close the side door. (*The Slave Girl executes the order.*) What causes your fear ?

MASSEUR. A creditor, my lady.

VASANTASENA. You may reopen the door, girl.

MASSEUR (*to himself*). Ah ! She is a person who does not know what it is to fear a creditor. It has been said with truth :  
The man who knows his own resources takes upon his shoulders a burden commensurate with his own strength ;  
though his road lie through the wilderness, he will not stumble and falter and fail.

I am saved !

MATHURA (*rubbing his eyes and speaking to the Gambler*). Come, pay ! Pay me !

GAMBLER. While we were quarrelling with Darduraka, sir, our man escaped.

MATHURA. I smashed his nose with a blow from my fist. Come, let's follow the drops of blood. (*They follow the trail.*)

GAMBLER. Sir, he entered Vasantasena's palace.

MATHURA. Good-bye to my pieces of gold !

GAMBLER. Let us carry our complaint before the king's tribunal.

MATHURA. No, the rascal will have to leave that house sometime, and he would make good his escape. By standing guard, we shall finally catch him.

*(Vasantasena makes a sign to Madanika.)*

MADANIKA. Tell us, sir, whence you come, who you are, whose son you are, your occupation, and the cause of your fear.

MASSEUR. If my lady will listen to me. The place of my birth was Pataliputra. I am the son of a householder ; my occupation is that of a masseur.

VASANTASENA. You have learned a delicate art, sir.

MASSEUR. My lady, I learned it as an art, but now it is only a trade.

MADANIKA. You answer most disconsolately, sir. Please continue.

MASSEUR. Yes, my lady. While I was at home I heard the tales told by travellers and, impelled by a desire to see foreign lands, I left my own country. Arrived in Ujjayini, I entered the service of a young gentleman, beautiful of countenance and of charming manners. He was a noble man who said nothing of the favours that he rendered to others, and forgot the offenses of others against him ; in brief, he was so generous that he gave freely even himself to his friends, and never failed to answer the requests of those who asked for his protection.

MADANIKA. Who can this man be--this ornament of Ujjayini who seems to have borrowed the virtues of my mistress' beloved ?

VASANTASENA. Excellent, my girl, excellent ! That is the very question that is in my heart.

MADANIKA. Please continue, sir.

MASSEUR. My lady, at the present time, due to the unfailing liberality of his sympathetic nature—

VASANTASENA. He has become poor, has he not ?

MASSEUR. How could you know, my lady, before I told you ?

VASANTASENA. It is nothing that anyone could not have



guessed. Virtues seldom accompany wealth ; and the deepest pools have the least potable water.

MADANIKA. What, sir, was this man's name ?

MASSEUR. Who does not know the name of this moon that brightens the earth ? He dwells on the Square of the Guilds and his glorious name is Charudatta.

VASANTASENA (*arising joyfully*). Sir, my house is at your disposition. Madanika, bring him a seat and equip yourself with a fan. Our guest is perishing of fatigue. (*Madanika does as she is bid.*)

MASSEUR (*to himself*). What a welcome the mere mention of Charudatta's name wins for me ! Hail, noble Charudatta, hail ! You are the only man on earth who truly lives—the others merely breathe. (*He falls to his knees.*) You are too kind, my lady ; thank you. Please resume your seat, my lady.

VASANTASENA (*sitting down*). What became of your patron ?

MASSEUR. Anyone may hold awhile the transitory wealth that comes and goes, but the honourable man is always rich in good deeds. He knows most of honour who knows how to honour merit.

VASANTASENA. Please continue.

MASSEUR. So the noble Charudatta engaged me to exercise my skill in his household ; but when all his wealth save his virtue had vanished, I was forced to seek my livelihood from games of chance. And the fickleness of fortune has just made me lose ten pieces of gold.

MATHURA. I have been ruined ! I have been robbed !

MASSEUR. So one of the players and the keeper of the gambling-house, whom you hear out there, are pursuing me. You know everything now, my lady, and you are the arbiter.

VASANTASENA. Madanika, even the birds flutter from place to place when the trees which shelter them are shaken. Go, my girl ; find the gambler and the keeper of the gambling-house and give them this bracelet, telling them that it is sent by this gentleman. (*She takes off a bracelet and gives it to the Slave Girl.*)

SLAVE GIRL (*taking the bracelet*). You are obeyed, my lady. (*She goes out.*)

MATHURA. I have been ruined ! I have been robbed !

SLAVE GIRL. Seeing those two men who raise their eyes to heaven, who heave deep sighs, and who talk eagerly to each other without taking their eyes from this door, I suppose they are the gambler and the gambling-master. (*She approaches them.*) Sirs, I salute you.

MATHURA. Welcome, young woman.

SLAVE GIRL. Which of you, sir, is the keeper of a gambling-house ?

MATHURA. To whom, O slender-waisted girl whose lips bear the marks of the bites that are given in amorous ecstasy, do you, with alluring glances, speak such charming speech ? I am not rich. Solicit someone else.

SLAVE GIRL. Indeed, if you don't adopt that tone, you wouldn't be a gambler. Doesn't one of you have a debtor ?

MATHURA. That's right. A person owes me ten pieces of gold. What about him ?

SLAVE GIRL. My mistress sends you this bracelet to pay-- No, no ! He himself sends it.

MATHURA (*seizing the bracelet with joy*). Ah ! Tell the excellent gentleman that I consider his credit re-established and that he is most welcome to return to enjoy the delights of the game. (*Exeunt Mathura and the Gambler.*)

SLAVE GIRL (*having returned to Vasantasena*). My lady, the gambler and the keeper of the gambling-house have departed well satisfied.

VASANTASENA. Sir, you may go now to reassure your family.

MASSEUR. My lady, since you have done this, permit my hands to exercise their skill in your service.

VASANTASENA. Sir, you should serve only the master for whom you learned your art and who first engaged you.

MASSEUR (*to himself*). That is an adroit way to acquit me of my debt. How, then, can I show my gratitude ? (*aloud*) My lady, perceiving the shamefulness of a gambler's life, I have resolved to become a Buddhist ascetic. Remember then, I pray you, that the masseur who was addicted to gambling became a friar in the service of the Lord.

VASANTASENA. Do not act too impulsively, sir.

MASSEUR. My lady, I am resolved. (*He passes across the stage.*)

Gambling has made me misanthropic ; henceforth shall I pass my days wandering with shaven head along the great highways.

*(Loud cries are heard offstage.)*

MASSEUR *(listening)*. What has happened ? What's that ? *(He listens to an imagined voice.)* What do you say ? He says that an untamed elephant called Post-Breaker, kept for the amusement of Vasantasena, has just broken loose ! Exciting ! I must run to see her formidable elephant. But hold ! To what purpose ? Better fulfill at once the vow that I have taken. *(Exit.)*

*(Enter Karnapuraka, flinging aside the curtain. His bearing indicates pride.)*

KARNAPURAKA. Where is she ? Where is our mistress ?

MADANIKA. Well, insolent servant, why are you so excited ?

Can't you see our lady seated here ?

KARNAPURAKA *(seeing Vasantasena)*. I bow to you, my lady.

VASANTASENA. Your face is beaming, Karnapuraka. What is it ?

KARNAPURAKA *(proudly)*. My lady, you missed a great deal in not seeing the exploit that Karnapuraka has just accomplished.

VASANTASENA. What is it, Karnapuraka ? What is it ?

KARNAPURAKA. Listen, then, my lady. Post-Breaker, my lady's ill-dispositioned elephant, broke the post to which he was chained, killed his mahout, and burst forth into the highway, causing an indescribable tumult. Everyone screamed ;

"Take away the children ! Hurry ! Climb up on the trees and walls ! Run ! Don't you see this mad elephant charging at us ?"

And

"The ankle-bands fall off ! The girdles constellated with diamonds snap in two ; and the splendid ornaments covered with pearls are broken !"

Then, plunging through the city of Ujjayini which he wrecked with his trunk, his feet, and his tusks, as though it were a pool covered with blown lotus-flowers, this untamable elephant came upon a religious mendicant. The poor man's

staff, pitcher, and begging-bowl are broken ; the elephant squirts water on him and catches him up on his tusks. Then all the spectators shriek : "Oh, oh ! He has killed the religious mendicant !"

VASANTASENA (*with emotion*). Heavens, what a misfortune ! What an accident !

KARNAPURAKA. Do not be alarmed, my lady ; just listen ! As soon as I saw this elephant dragging his broken chain and carrying the religious mendicant on his tusks, I, I, Karnapuraka—No, my lady, I, the unworthy slave whom you maintain, went by another way, stumbled over a gambler's score, carried with all haste a bar of iron from the market-place, and gave battle to this raging elephant.

VASANTASENA. What then ? What then ?

KARNAPURAKA. Having impetuously struck down this furious monster that towered aloft like one of the peaks of the Vindhya, I rescued the religious mendicant whom he carried on his tusks.

VASANTASENA. Well done ! And what then ?

KARNAPURAKA. Then, my lady, the whole population of this city (for by this time Ujjayini was like a ship so unequally laden that one side is on a level with the waves) cried : "Bravo, Karnapuraka ! Well done !" And one man, having vainly sought about his person for valuables, lifted his eyes to heaven, sighed deeply, and threw this cloak to me.

VASANTASENA. Karnapuraka, see if that cloak is not scented with jasmine.

KARNAPURAKA. The odour of the must elephant, my lady, is about me so strongly that I cannot tell.

VASANTASENA. Then see if there is not a name on it.

KARNAPURAKA. Here it is, my lady. You will be able to read it. (*He gives her the cloak.*)

VASANTASENA. It's the noble Charudatta's ! (*Delightedly she takes the cloak and puts it on*)

MADANIKA. Is not this cloak very becoming to our mistress, Karnapuraka ?

KARNAPURAKA. Yes, it's nice enough.

VASANTASENA. Karnapuraka, here is your reward. (*She gives him a jewel.*)

KARNAPURAKA (*making obeisance, after taking the jewel*).

Our lady's cloak is indeed most becoming to her !

VASANTASENA. Karnapuraka, where is Charudatta at this moment ?

KARNAPURAKA. He is returning home along this street.

VASANTASENA. My girl, let us go to the upper terrace of the house and watch Charudatta pass by. (*Excunt omnes.*)

(*Thus Ends the Second Act, "The Masseur Who Gambled".*)

### ACT THREE

(*Enter Vardhamanaka.*)

VARDHAMANAKA. The benevolence of a noble master is not eclipsed by misfortune, for even in poverty he is kind to his servants ; but the man whom riches make proud and whom prosperity makes hard, becomes malicious and cruel.

For indeed :

You cannot prevent cattle from seeking the fields of ripe grain, nor an adulterer from coveting the wife of another, nor a gambler from surrendering to his passion ; neither can you prevent a man from yielding to the innate deficiencies of his character.

It was quite a while ago that the master, Charudatta, went out to attend a concert . . . . It's after midnight, and still he doesn't come ! Well, I shall have a quiet nap here in the vestibule. (*He suits action to words.*)

(*Enter Charudatta and Maitreya.*)

CHARUDATTA. Ah, how beautifully Rebhila sang tonight ! And truly the lute, though it does not come from the depths of the sea, is none the less a pearl, for

It is a friend who comforts the heart of the man who is separated from his beloved ; the best of distractions in the tedious hours that delay the moment of meeting ; the ambrosia that consoles the heart of him whom separation afflicts ; and a delicious stimulant to the passion of lovers.

MAITREYA. Well, aren't we going home ?

CHARUDATTA. Ah, how beautifully the accomplished Rebhila sang !

MAITREYA. There are two things that always make me laugh : a woman who speaks Sanskrit and a man who croons a song. The woman who speaks Sanskrit goes *su-su* like a heifer whose nostrils have just been pierced for a ring ; and the man who croons reminds me of an aged priest who, chapleted with garlands of withered flowers, intones his prayers in a sing-song voice. Such things do not please me.

CHARUDATTA. No, my friend ; the accomplished Rebhila sang perfectly this evening. How could you fail to be delighted ?

His voice was insinuating and passionate ; it was flowing and clear, voluptuous, gracious, and enchanting. But why seek to praise each quality ? It is sufficient to say that I found myself wondering whether I was not listening to some unseen woman.

Yes,

Though the concert is over, as I walk along it seems to me that I still hear it—the soft voice passing through all the intonations of the scale, and the accompanying melody of the lute, now surging up through the whole series of notes, and now becoming a languorous murmur as the song subsides ; the nuances of feeling blended together in harmony ; and the encores of passages that were especially enjoyed.

MAITREYA. Come, my friend. Even the dogs are tranquilly asleep in the street which passes through the market place. Let us go in ! (*He looks before him.*) See, over there, the abdicant moon descends from his airy palace and gives liberty to the darkness !

CHARUDATTA. Even so !

The horned moon has ceded its place to obscurity and floats down the verge of the horizon like a wild elephant which has plunged into dark water and leaves visible only tips of its pointed tusks.

MAITREYA. Well, here is our house. Ho there, Vardhamanaka ! Open the door !

VARDHAMANAKA. It's master Maitreya's voice that I hear.

Master Charudatta has returned. I must open the door for him. (*He does so.*) I salute you, Master, and you also, Maitreya. The beds are ready, sirs ; you may go to bed at once. (*Charudatta and Maitreya sit down.*)

MAITREYA. Vardhamanaka, call Radanika to wash our feet. CHARUDATTA (*gently*). She is asleep. We should not disturb her.

VARDHAMANAKA. I will bring the water and you, Maitreya, can wash his feet.

MAITREYA (*with anger*). Did you hear that insolent son of a slave ? He suggested that he would bring the water and he asked me—me, who am a Brahmana—to wash your feet !

CHARUDATTA. Well, Maitreya, bring the water and Vardhamanaka will wash my feet.

VARDHAMANAKA. Very good, sir. Please bring the water, Maitreya.

(*Maitreya pours the water. Vardhamanaka washes the feet of Charudatta and is about to go.*)

CHARUDATTA. Bring water for this Brahmana ; his feet also must be washed.

MAITREYA. Oh, what's the use ? I'll soon have to kick up the dust again, like an ass that has been beaten.

VARDHAMANAKA. But master Maitreya, you are a Brahmana

MAITREYA. Yes, just as a garter snake is a serpent among the serpents, so I am a Brahmana among the Brahmanas.

VARDHAMANAKA. However that may be, I shall wash your feet. (*He does so*) Master Maitreya, here is the jewel-casket which I was to guard during the day, and you during the night. (*Exit, after giving Maitreya the casket.*)

MAITREYA (*taking it*). What ? Is that accursed thing still here ? Is there no thief in all Ujjayini to steal this casket which steals my sleep ? What do you say, my friend ? I'll put it in the inner courtyard.

CHARUDATTA. Do nothing of the sort ! This deposit was entrusted to us by the hetaera, and you, on your honour as a Brahmana, must guard it in person until it is returned to her. (*Charudatta drowsily repeats the stanza, "Though the concert is over," etc.*)

MAITREYA. Are you asleep, sir ?

CHARUDATTA. Indeed,

Sleep seems to flow quietly over my forehead and pour down upon my eyelids ; like old age, it comes unseen, advances with silent steps, filches away the vigour of a man, and grows strong with the strength that it has stolen from him,

MAITREYA. Well, then, let's sleep. (*Both men slumber. Enter Sarvilaka.*)

SARVILAKA. Having, thanks to my skill and strength, made an opening in the outer wall through which my body can easily pass, and which permits me to prosecute my enterprise, I shall steal forward, crawling and rubbing my ribs along the ground, like a snake that is shedding its old skin.

(*He looks at the sky and smiles.*) Ah, ah ! The moon is vanishing, and now :

Night has hidden the stars behind a thick curtain of clouds ; like a mother, she clothes with darkness the intrepid hero who undertakes to pillage the house of another, and whose profession worries the royal guardsmen.

Having made a breach in the outer wall, I have made my way into the garden. And now I must set to work on the house itself. Yes,

People may cast aspersions on our craft because our successes are facilitated by the sleep and by the unwariness of our victims, people may despise our stratagems and call our heroism brigandage, but our independence, however decried, is certainly preferable to menial labour and servitude. Moreover, was not the path that I follow traced of old by Drona's son when he took advantage of their sleep to slay the Pandava chieftains ?

And now where shall I make an opening ?

Where the wall has settled because of the infiltration of water ; where there will be no noise ; where the aperture will not present an aspect contrary to that prescribed by the rules of Kleptology ; where the masonry is old and the bricks have been corroded by saltpetre ; where women will not see me ; in a word, where I can hope to attain success most speedily.

(*He sounds the wall.*) Here, precisely, is the place where the



clay has been loosened by alternate exposure to the sun's heat and to water from the eaves ; it has been cracked open by saltpetre, and there are rat-holes. Excellent ! My work is well on its way. Such a beginning is an excellent augury for the children of the Clever One. Now let me see. . . . How shall I make a breach in the wall ? In situations of this sort, the Lord of the Golden Javelin has prescribed four methods of procedure : if the bricks are of terra cotta, they must be removed ; if they are of dried clay, they must be cut ; if the wall is of piled-up earth, water must be applied ; if there are wooden pilings, they must be sawn in two. In this case, the bricks, since they are of terra cotta, must be removed.

Now the aperture may be shaped like a full-blown lotus flower, like the disk of the sun, like the crescent moon, like an eclipse, like an elongated rectangle, like a swastika, or like a water-ewer. Now how can I exhibit my proficiency in the art, so that citizens, when they inspect my work tomorrow, will be struck with admiration ?

In the case of these terra cotta bricks, the ewer-shaped aperture would, I think, be most appropriate—so that is the form which I shall adopt.

On other occasions, when I had pierced walls corroded with saltpetre and had undertaken difficult operations, the next morning the neighbours, when they examined my handiwork, criticized the errors that I had made, or praised the skillfulness of my craftsmanship. Glory to the youthful god Karttikeya who answers our prayers ! Glory to the Lord of the Golden Javelin who is pious and devoted to Brahman ! Hail to the Son of Siva ! Praise to the Master of Magic whose foremost disciple am I ! Propitiously has he given me the unguent of invulnerability.

I have only to anoint myself with it, and the guardsmen will be unable to see me ; when I am protected by it, swords directed against me will make no wound. (*He anoints himself.*)

Ah, for shame ! I have forgotten my measuring-tape ! (*He ponders a moment.*) But now that I think about it, my Brahmanic cord will take its place. Truly this cord is a

very precious thing—especially for a Brahmana like me !  
For indeed,

It can be used to measure off the opening that one makes in walls, to pull down jewels from the high shelves on which they are placed, to manipulate bolts so that the most solidly constructed door may be opened, and to make a tourniquet when one is bitten by a venomous insect or snake.

So let's measure off the proportions and put ourselves to work. (*He works for some time, then stops to examine the hole that he has made.*) Only one more brick to be removed ; then the breach will be perfect. Damn it ! I have been bitten by a snake. (*He binds his Brahmanic cord about his finger, and for a moment he shows the effects of the venom.*) What an efficacious remedy. I am all right now. (*He resumes work ; then stops and peers into the opening.*) Ah, I see a light ! Thus

The golden glow of the lamp traverses the aperture and shines along the ground ; it gleams in the depths of the encompassing darkness like a grain of gold on a pantarū.  
(*He resumes his work.*)

There, the passage is completed. Well, let's go in—or rather, let's not go in until we have introduced our companion. (*He pushes a mannikin inside.*) Ah, good ! There's no one about. Glory to Karttikēya ! (*He passes through the breach in the wall and emerging on the inside of the house looks about.*) Ah ! Two men asleep ! I must open the door so that I will have a means of escape. Curse it ! The house is old and the door squeaks. I'll get some water. . . . But where can I find it ? (*He hunts about, finally finds some water, and applies it to the door with great precaution.*) Now I hope that this sagging door doesn't fall from its hinges and make a racket. . . . Well, let's risk it. (*With his back to the door, he slowly opens it.*) Good ! Now it's a question of finding out whether these two are merely pretending they are asleep, or are really asleep. (*Watching them intently, he suddenly makes a menacing gesture.*) Well, it would seem that they are really asleep, for Their respiration is regular, calm, and deep ; their eyes are closed tightly, but do not seem to be constrained ; there is no flickering of the eyelids. Their bodies are

relaxed, and their limbs with unflexed muscles dangle over the edge of the beds. Moreover, if their sleep were feigned, they could not stand scrutiny with the rays of the lamp shining full upon their faces. (*He looks about.*) Well, what's this ? A drum ! And here's a flute, and there's a tambourine, and here, a vina, and bamboo pipes; and over there, a pile of manuscripts. Can it be that I have entered the house of a master of music and dancing ? But no ! This house, as I observed before entering, has a palatial exterior. . . . Now I must ascertain whether this apparent poverty is real or feigned—whether the owner has hidden his riches below ground in fear of either the king or thieves. Well, Sarvilaka's property is underground ! I shall scatter my magic grain. (*He does so.*) Oh ! My magic instrument has been employed and it indicates nothing. The poverty of these people is genuine. I may as well go.

MAITREYA (*speaking in his sleep*). Ho there, my friend ! I seem to see a breach in the wall. . . . I seem to see a thief . . . So please take charge of this jewel-case.

SARVILAKA. What ! Who is this person who has discovered my presence and is taunting me—for it is obvious that he is poor ? Will it be necessary to kill him ? Or is he really dreaming, poor wretch ? (*observing closely*) Oh ho ! He spoke truly. In the light I can see a casket wrapped in a tattered bath-robe I'll take it ! . . . But no ! Would it be honourable to augment the misfortunes of a man of good family who is impoverished, even as I ? I'll go away.

MAITREYA. My friend, if you do not take this casket, you will sin as sins the man who curbs a cow or refuses the wish of a Brahmana.

SARVILAKA I cannot spurn this solemn adjuration made in the name of the cow and of the Brahmana ; I'll take the casket. . . . But wait ! The light of the lamp might betray me. I have equipped myself with a moth which will extinguish the lamp. Now this is the time and place to use it. I have released it. It flies in irregular gyrations about the lamp, and, by the beating of its wings, extinguishes the flame. Ah ! What accursed darkness ! Alas ! Should I not, instead, bewail the fact that I have darkened the honour of the Brahmanic family in which I was born ? For am I

not Sarvilaka, son of a noble and wealthy Brahmana who was learned in the four Vedas, and a Brahmana myself ? Yet I commit this crime because of Madanika, the courtesan ! . . . Well, let's obey this Brahmana's request. (*He reaches for the casket.*)

MAITREYA. How cold your fingers are, my friend !

SARVILAKA. What stupidity ! My fingers are cold from applying the water. I'll put my hand in my arm-pit. (*Having warmed his left hand in this way, he takes the casket.*)

MAITREYA. Do you have it ?

SARVILAKA. I could not deny a Brahmana's request. Yes, I have it.

MAITREYA. Now I shall sleep as tranquilly as the merchant who has sold all his wares.

SARVILAKA. Sleep a hundred years, if you wish, great Brahmana ! . . . But alas ! Must the life of a Brahmanic family be thus darkened for the sake of Madanika, the courtesan ? Alas ! It is my life that is darkened !

Oh, cursed be Poverty ! It arouses involuntary audacity and drives a man to commit crimes at the very moment that he condemns them.

Now I must go to the palace of Vasantasena and purchase freedom for Madanika. (*He starts to leave.*) Ah ! I think I hear footsteps ! If it's only not the watchman ! . . . But come, let's stand motionless and assume the attitude of a column, For what are watchmen to me, Sarvilaka, who can Climb like a cat, run like an antelope, pounce like a hawk, like a dog measure the strength of a man whether he be sleeping or awake, crawl like a serpent, assume as many disguises as Maya herself, understand as many languages as the Goddess of Speech, penetrate the darkness like a light, crawl through chinks like a lizard, gallop like a horse, and pass through water like a ship ?

Yes, indeed !

Must I dart away ? I am a snake. Should I stand motionless ? I am a mountain. Be swift ? I am like the King of Eagles. Scrutinize the ground ? I have the eye of a rabbit. Seize something ? I snap like a wolf. Use force ? I am a lion. (*Enter Radanika.*)

RADANIKA. Well, well ! What is the matter ? Vardhamanaka

went to sleep by the door of the vestibule, but he is no longer there. I shall have to awaken master Maitreya. (*She advances.*)

SARVILAKA (*who has prepared to kill the intruder, sees Radanika.*)

Oh, it's a woman ! Let's depart ! (*Exit.*)

RADANIKA (*terrified*). What was that ? There ! A thief has made a hole in the wall ! There he goes, making his escape ! I must arouse Maitreya ! (*She goes to Maitreya.*) Wake up, master Maitreya ! Wake up ! a thief has made a hole in the wall and is running away.

MAITREYA (*rousing*). What are you talking about, daughter of a slave ? What thief has made ? What hole is running away ?

RADANIKA. Don't laugh, unfortunate man ! Can't you see it ?

MAITREYA. What are you saying, slave ? Why, it's as though a second door was open ! Ho there ! Charudatta ! Get up ! Get up ! A thief broke into the house by making a breach in the wall ! He has just escaped !

CHARUDATTA. Come now, stop jesting.

MAITREYA. I am not jesting ; come see for yourself !

CHARUDATTA. Where, then ?

MAITREYA. Here !

CHARUDATTA (*inspecting the opening*). Truly, this breach is worthy of examination.

From top to bottom, the bricks have been removed carefully and piled to one side ; at head level, it is narrow, but it is suitably widened out in the middle. It is as though the house, like a noble heart, burst open as it shrank from the touch of base-born men.

This work was done skillfully.

MAITREYA. My friend, only two kinds of people could have made this breach : a foreigner or a person seeking practice in housebreaking. For who among all the inhabitants of Ujjayini does not well know how much wealth he would find in our house ?

CHARUDATTA. Some stranger, no doubt, cut this hole in the wall with great toil and caution, not knowing that within we slept with the profound sleep that comes only to the penniless. Seeing the lavish size and design of our house, he conceived great hopes, but, after having exhausted

himself in toiling to make this breach, he had to go away disappointed.

What can this unfortunate man tell his friends? That he entered the home of the son of a merchant-prince, and found nothing?

MAITREYA. Are you going to sympathize with that wretch?

He said to himself: "There's a fine house where I can steal a chest of precious stones or a casket containing golden jewelry . . ." (*He pauses, then says to himself anxiously:*)

By the way, where is our jewel-casket? (*After some consideration he says aloud:*) My friend, you always say to me: "Maitreya, you are a nit-wit; Maitreya, you are a dunce."

But didn't I act wisely when I asked you to take charge of the jewel-casket? Had I not taken that precaution, this bastard would have stolen it.

CHARUDATTA. Don't jest!

MAITREYA. Though I may be a dunce, I am not ignorant of the time and place for jesting.

CHARUDATTA. When did you give it to me?

MAITREYA. At the time that I told you that your fingers were cold.

CHARUDATTA. Is it possible? (*After deliberation, facetiously:*)

My friend, I have some very good news for you.

MAITREYA. That it wasn't stolen?

CHARUDATTA. It was stolen.

MAITREYA. What good news, then?

CHARUDATTA. That the thief did not toil in vain.

MAITREYA. But it was a deposit.

CHARUDATTA. Ah, a deposit! (*He swoons.*)

MAITREYA. Take courage, sir! Why faint merely because this deposit was stolen by a thief?

CHARUDATTA (*reviving*). O friend,

Who will be willing to believe what has happened?

Everyone will doubt my word, for in this world poverty is honourless and wins only suspicion.

Alas!

Up to this day, fate has had some indulgence for me; it preyed only upon my possessions; but now it has become merciless and ravages my honour.

MAITREYA. As for me, I would deny everything. I would say:

"What deposit ? Who gave it ? Who accepted it ? Who were the witnesses ?"

CHARUDATTA. Should I take refuge in falsehood ?

By begging shall I procure the money necessary to restore the deposit that was entrusted to me, but I shall not annihilate honour by swearing to a lie.

RADANIKA. I must go to tell Dhuta, my mistress, what has happened. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter the Wife of Charudatta, accompanied by Radanika.*)

WIFE (*anxiously*). And my husband received absolutely no injury ? Nor Maitreya ?

RADANIKA. None whatsoever, madame ; but the hetaera's jewels were stolen. (*The Wife swoons.*)

RADANIKA. Oh, mistress ! restore yourself !

WIFE (*reviving*). Alas ! You said that my husband received no injury, but would it not have been better if his body had been wounded and his honour had remained unblemished ? All the inhabitants of Ujjayini will say that my lord, constrained by misery, committed this crime. (*She raises her eyes to heaven and sighs.*) O almighty Destiny ! It amuses you to watch the vacillating fortunes of the poor, who are, in your eyes, no more than drops of dew that quiver on the petals of a lotus. . . . I have nothing, save the necklace of pearls that came from my mother's house . . . But my noble husband, with his inflexible pride, might refuse to accept it. . . . Girl, ask Maitreya to come here.

RADANIKA. As you order, madame. (*She goes to Maitreya.*)

RADANIKA. Master Maitreya, my mistress wants to see you.

MAITREYA. Where is she ?

RADANIKA. In there. Go to her

MAITREYA (*approaching the Wife*). I salute you, madame.

WIFE. Sir, be welcome, and please turn yourself toward the east.

MAITREYA. Madame, I am now turned toward the east.

WIFE. Then, sir, take these.

MAITREYA. What does this mean ?

WIFE. I am observing the Fast of Pearls and, in the present

circumstances, I want to make a suitable gift to a Brahmana, but since he had something from someone else, I ask you to accept in his stead these pearls.

MAITREYA (*taking the necklace*). I thank you. I shall carry this to my friend.

WIFE. Maitreya, respect the delicacy of his sentiments (*Exit.*)

MAITREYA (*with admiration*). What nobility !

CHARUDATTA. Maitreya has been gone a long while. If only, in his distress, he does not turn to some rash expedient !  
Maitreya ! Maitreya !

MAITREYA (*going to Charudatta*) Here I am ! Take these !  
(*He offers him the necklace*)

CHARUDATTA. What is this ?

MAITREYA. That is what you gain by being married to a wife worthy of you.

CHARUDATTA. Ah ! Now that my wife takes pity on me, I perceive how poor I am. For

When a man's fortune is entirely gone and he is sustained by the generosity of his wife, then, in truth, he has become a wife, and his wife, a husband.

But no ! I am not poor, for

I have a wife who, with unwavering affection, places her property at my disposal ; you, who are a friend in joy and sorrow and my unsullied honour, which a poor man seldom can protect.

Maitreya, take this necklace of pearls and go to find Vasautasena. You will tell her for me that I, having thoughtlessly wagered her jewels in a game of chance, as though they were my own, lost them, and that I beg her to accept instead this necklace of pearls.

MAITREYA. But you are not going to give this necklace, a treasure engendered by four oceans, to replace a bauble that brought us neither food nor drink and was stolen by a thief !

CHARUDATTA. Do not say that, my friend ?

Relying on me, she entrusted to my care that deposit, and this necklace shall reward her for the high confidence that she reposed in me.

I charge you, then, by this heart that I touch, my friend :



Do not return until you have seen her accept the necklace.  
And you, Vardhamanaka,

Make haste and replace those bricks in the breach, for I  
would avoid scandal and spare the royal guardsmen the  
censure that their negligence would bring upon them.

And Maitreya, you must speak proudly, not abjectly.

MAITREYA. Can a pauper speak proudly ?

CHARUDATTA. But, my friend, I am no longer poor. (*He repeats  
the stanza, "I have a wife," etc.*) So go, then, my friend.  
As for me, as soon as I have bathed, I shall perform the rites  
prescribed for the hour of dawn. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

(*Thus Ends the Third Act, "The Housebreaking".*)

## ACT FOUR

(*Enter a Slave Girl.*)

SLAVE GIRL. I am sent to my mistress by her mother . . . I  
see her there, conversing with Madanika while her eyes are  
fixed on a painting. I'll go up to her. (*She moves forward.  
Vasantasena and Madanika are seen in the position indicated.*)

VASANTASENA. Madanika, my girl, this portrait of the noble  
Charudatta is a good likeness, is it not ?

MADANIKA. A very good likeness.

VASANTASENA. How do you know ?

MADANIKA. My lady, by the tenderness in the eyes which  
you cannot turn away from it.

VASANTASENA. But, my girl—is not your reply dictated by  
that complaisance which is customary in the house of a  
courtesan, Madanika ?

MADANIKA. Does dwelling in the house of a courtesan make  
one a sychophant, my lady ?

VASANTASENA. Unfortunately, my girl, courtesans, by passing  
from lover to lover, finally express only simulated sentiments.

MADANIKA. Seeing, my lady, that your eyes and your heart are  
entranced with contemplation of this portrait, one need  
not ask why.

VASANTASENA. I am afraid that my friends will laugh at me.

MADANĪKA. Have no fear of that, my lady. All women can understand what passes in the heart of a friend.

SLAVE GIRL (*approaching*). My lady, your mother begs you to enter the curtained *gharri* which waits you at the side door.

VASANTASENA. Is it the noble Charudatta who wishes to take me to his house ?

SLAVE GIRL. With the *gharri*, my lady, you were sent a jewel that is worth one hundred thousand pieces of gold.

VASANTASENA. By whom ?

SLAVE GIRL. By Samsthanaka, brother-in-law to the king.

VASANTASENA (*angrily*). Be off ! Never say that again !

SLAVE GIRL. Do not be angry, my lady, I merely delivered a message.

VASANTASENA. It is the message that causes my anger.

SLAVE GIRL. What shall I tell your mother ?

VASANTASENA. Tell her that, if she does not wish to see me die, she must send no more solicitations.

SLAVE GIRL. As you command, my lady. (*Exit.*)

SARVILAKA (*entering*). I committed a crime under the cover of darkness. I conquered sleep and I outwitted the watchman ; but now that the night is vanishing, I am like the moon whose rays grow feeble with the coming of dawn.

Aye, truly,

Whenever a man glances at me as I hasten my steps, whenever a man walks briskly towards me while I am standing still and perplexed—my burdened conscience takes alarm at every meeting. With fear and anxiety the guilty man punishes himself for his own misdeeds.

I admit it. I committed a crime for the sake of Madanika. I avoided the house of the man who pays no attention to the babbling of his servants ; I shunned the house where, as I observed, a woman was master ; I stood motionless as a column when the watchman approached. Thus did I have recourse to a hundred stratagems and make the night my day. (*He walks on.*)

VASANTASENA. My girl, place this portrait over my bed, and bring me a fan, quickly.

MADANIKA. I obey you, my lady. (*Having taken the portrait, exit.*)

SARVILAKA. Well, here is the house of Vasantasena. I shall go in. (*He enters the house.*) Now where can I find Madanika? (*Enter Madanika, carrying a fan.*) Ah, there is Madanika ! One would say that she is Rati vanquishing with her beauty even Madana himself. The sight of her is like the cool fragrance of sandalwood : it refreshes my heart burned by the flames of desire.

Madanika ! Madanika !

MADANIKA (*seeing him*). Oh, there's Sarvilaka ! Welcome, Sarvilaka ! Where have you been ?

SARVILAKA. I will tell you. (*They exchange amorous glances.*)

VASANTASENA. Madanika is gone a long time. Where can she be ? (*She looks out through a foramen.*) Ah, there she is conversing with a man. She fixes upon him eyes molten with love. She seems to drink him with her eyes. As nearly as I can judge, he is the man who intends to emancipate her. May she find all happiness ! One should never interfere with lovers : I shall not call her.

MADANIKA. Explain, then, Sarvilaka. (*He looks about with evident anxiety.*) Why these fearful glances, Sarvilaka ?

SARVILAKA. I have a secret to confide in you. Are we alone ?

MADANIKA. Of course.

VASANTASENA. Oh, so it's a secret. . . . I should not listen.

SARVILAKA. Madanika, would Vasantasena consent to give you your liberty if she were paid in full ?

VASANTASENA. Well, if it concerns me, I have a right to listen.

MADANIKA. I have talked with my mistress about that, Sarvilaka, and she said that, if she could do as she desires, she would liberate all her slaves without payment. But Sarvilaka, how can it be that you have become so rich that you can buy me from my mistress ?

SARVILAKA. Oppressed by poverty and inspired by love, I committed this night, O my beautiful girl, a crime for your sake.

VASANTASENA. His fine features seem convulsed by the memory of the crime that he committed.

MADANIKA. You have risked two things, Sarvilaka, for the sake of an unworthy woman

SARVILAKA. What ?

MADANIKA. Your life and your honour.

SARVILAKA. Foolish girl ! Fortune favours the brave and the bold.

MADANIKA. But Sarvilaka, your reputation is safe ? And surely you cannot have committed a nefarious crime for my sake ?

SARVILAKA. I did not strip a woman of the jewels that bedeck her like the flowers of a vine ; I did not take away the livelihood of a Brahmana, nor did I steal the gold that was destined for religious ceremonies ; I did not tear a child from its nurse's arms to obtain ransom. At the very moment that I committed this crime, I kept in mind the distinction between that which may be done and that which must never be done.

But I want you to say to Vasantasena :

"Here are ornaments that might have been made expressly for you. Please accept them, for my sake—but I wish that you would not let them be seen."

MADANIKA. Jewelry that must be kept out of sight and a courtesan of her character are two things that do not go well together, Sarvilaka. But let's see these ornaments.

SARVILAKA. Here they are. (*He gives them to her hesitantly.*)

MADANIKA (*examining them*). It seems to me that I have seen these somewhere before. Where did you get them ?

SARVILAKA. What does that matter to you, Madanika ? Take them !

MADANIKA (*vexed*). If you have no confidence in me, why do you want to purchase my freedom ?

SARVILAKA. Well, then, if you must know, it was in the Square of the Guilds and, as I heard this morning, at the house of

Charudatta, the son of a merchant-prince. (*Vasantasena and Madanika swoon.*) Madanika, revive ! What is the matter ? Now that

I have come to buy your freedom, your body becomes limp with terror, and your eyes roll wildly ? Why, instead of rejoicing with me, do you tremble in every limb ?  
MADANIKA (*recovering*). Unlucky man ! If only you have not killed or harmed anyone in the house in which you committed this crime for my sake !

SARVILAKA. You know, Madanika, that Sarvilaka never raises his hand against a man who is asleep or afraid. In that house I neither killed nor wounded anyone.

MADANIKA. Is that true ?

SARVILAKA. I swear that it is true.

VASANTASENA (*reviving*). Oh, I come back to life !

MADANIKA. My dear !

SARVILAKA (*jealously*). What do you mean by that, Madanika ?

Though I come from a family which, till now, included only men of unsullied honour, I, with my heart fettered by love for you, heedlessly committed a crime. Though passion overcame my integrity, I observed certain scruples. But you—even when you say you love me, you are thinking of another.

(*pointedly*) Men of good family are like tall trees bearing rich fruit, their inheritance. But these fruits, alas, are devoured by rapacious birds that are called courtesans. And when the tree is bare, they shun it.

Youth and wealth are consumed in the conflagration of love that is kindled by desire and burns with the flames of voluptuousness.

VASANTASENA (*amused*). How unseasonably does he burst into anger !

SARVILAKA. Yes, I say,

Fools are all who place their trust in women or in fortune, for fortune and women are as agile and as erratic as snakes.

One should never fall in love with women : they have only contempt for the man who adores them. Take your pleasure of the woman who offers herself and shun the one who seems reserved.

And it is indeed true that

They smile and they weep—for money. They capture a man's confidence and confide in no one. A wellborn and honourable man, therefore, must avoid courtesans as one avoids the jasmine that blooms in the graveyard.

And moreover

The mind of a woman is as mutable as the waves of the sea. Her affections, like crimson gleams on the evening clouds, glow for a moment and are gone. When she has stripped a man of his possessions, she casts the worthless thing away like a rouge-globule that has been squeezed dry.

Aye, women are inconstant.

They carry one man in their heart while they lure another with their eyes. At the very moment that they have intercourse with one man, their bodies pulse with lubricity at the mere thought of another.

With truth has it been said :

"The lotus does not flourish on the mountain peaks ; the donkey cannot replace the horse ; the barley that is sown does not ripen into rice ; and women who were born in a brothel can never become virtuous

O wretch ! O damned Charudatta ! If only I had you here !  
(*He strides forward a few paces*)

MADANIKA (*catching the edge of his garment.*) Wait ! You are raving ! Why become infuriated over figments of the imagination ?

SARVILAKA. What do you call figments of the imagination ?

MADANIKA. These jewels belong to my mistress.

SARVILAKA. And what then ?

MADANIKA. She had left them in his care.

SARVILAKA. And why ?

MADANIKA (*whispering in his ear*) It was like this. . .

SARVILAKA (*amazed*). Oh ! Can it be ?

Unwittingly I have stripped of its leaves the bough in whose shade I would seek refuge from the burning heat of noon.

VASANTASENA. Ah ! He is overcome with remorse. He acted in ignorance.

SARVILAKA. Madanika, what can we do now ?

MADANIKA. You must know best.

SARVILAKA. That is not so. For

Women are wise by instinct, whereas men have need of the lessons that are found in books

MADANIKA. If you wish my advice, then, Sarvilaka, these jewels should be returned to that worthy gentleman.

SARVILAKA. But Madanika, what if he had me taken before the tribunal ?

MADANIKA. The rays of the moon are never withering.

VASANTASENA. Excellent, Madanika, excellent !

SARVILAKA. Madanika,

In truth, the crime that I committed causes me neither confusion nor terror, so why speak to me of the virtues of that worthy man ? I am ashamed of the deed that dishonoured me : what greater punishment could the king inflict on a man who has sinned as I have ?

But to do this would be imprudent. We must find some other expedient.

MANDANIKA. Then here is another plan :

VASANTASENA. What expedient will she propose ?

MADANIKA. Pretend that you are sent by the worthy gentleman, and give the jewels to my mistress.

SARVILAKA. And when I have done this, what then ?

MADANIKA. You will no longer be a thief, he will be discharged of his responsibility, and my mistress will regain possession of her jewels.

SARVILAKA. Isn't that adding one crime to another ?

MADANIKA. Nonsense ! Any other course would augment your crime.

VASANTASENA. Excellent, Madanika, excellent ! You speak like a free woman.

SARVILAKA. In nights that are unilluminated by the rays of the moon, it is difficult to find a guide who can show one the road ; but led by you, I have found my way to wisdom.

MADANIKA. Well then, wait here in this shrine consecrated to Kama, while I announce your visit to my mistress.

SARVILAKA. Very well.

MADANIKA (*going to Vasantasena*). My lady, a Brahmana sent by the noble Charudatta is waiting to see you.

VASANTASENA. How do you know that he was sent by Charudatta ?

MADANIKA. How could I be mistaken, my lady. This is a man who comes for me.

VASANTASENA (*smiling and nodding her head ; to herself*). That is so. (*aloud*) Tell him to come in.

MADANIKA. I obey, my lady. (*She leaves the room and goes to Sarvilaka.*) Come, Sarvilaka.

SARVILAKA (*advancing, with evident discomfiture*). I salute you, lady.

VASANTASENA. You are welcome, sir. Please sit down.

SARVILAKA. The noble gentleman asked me, madame, to tell you that, since his house is quite dilapidated, your jewels are not in safety there, and he begs you to take them back. (*He gives the casket of jewels to Madanika and prepares to depart*)

VASANTASENA. Sir, I wish that you would take something in return.

SARVILAKA (*to himself*). I don't know who will take it to him ! (*aloud*) What may that be, madame ?

VASANTASENA. Sir, you are to take Madanika.

SARVILAKA. But madame, I do not understand.

VASANTASENA. But I understand completely.

SARVILAKA. And what . . . ?

VASANTASENA. The noble Charudatta told me to give Madanika to the person who returned these jewels to me. And so, sir, you must understand that he makes you a present of her

SARVILAKA (*to himself*). She knows everything ! (*aloud*) Praise to the noble Charudatta, praise !

One should never become weary of practicing virtue ,



for the poorest man, if virtuous, is stronger than the wealthiest evil-door.

Yes,

One should never become weary of practicing virtue, for there is nothing that may not easily be obtained by it. It was by its preeminent virtue that the moon obtained the honour of becoming the diadem on the inviolable head of Siva.

VASANTASENA. Ho, there ! Driver ! (*Enter a Slave driving a gharri.*)

SLAVE. Your *gharri* is ready, my lady.

VASANTASENA. Madanika, my girl, be cheerful and do as you wish. I have emancipated you. Enter this *gharri*. And do not forget me

MADANIKA (*bursting into tears*). You are sending me away, my lady ! (*She throws herself at the feet of her mistress.*)

VASANTASENA. No, henceforth it is you who should be saluted with respect. So come, then, get into the *gharri*. But do not forget me.

SARVILAKA. Heaven bless you, my lady. Madanika,

Do as your mistress wishes, and take leave of her, saluting with gratitude and respect the one from whom you have received that precious veil, the title of wife. (*He and Madanika enter the gharri and drive away.*)

A VOICE (*offstage*). Hear ye ! Hear ye ! The Praefect of the City publishes the following edict :

“His Majesty Palaka, the King, vexed by the credulousness of those who believe a certain soothsayer’s prophecy to the effect that Aryaka, the son of Gopala, would become king, has had the aforesaid Aryaka apprehended and arrested in a country hamlet, and has had him chained and incarcerated in a dismal dungeon. Let all men, therefore, remain in their places and keep the peace.”

SARVILAKA (*having listened*). What ! King Palaka has thrown my dear friend Aryaka into prison ! And just as I am being married ! What an unseasonable event ! But

A man has in this world but two things that are dear to him, his friend and his mistress, but in these circumstances

he should prefer his friend to a hundred mistresses.

I must act ! And get out of this *gharri* ! (*He descends from the vehicle.*)

MADANIKA (*weeping and clasping her hands*). Oh, wait !

Isn't it necessary, my lord, to have me taken to some home where I will be in safety ?

SARVILAKA. Yes, indeed, my dear one ; you say precisely what I was thinking (*to the Slave*) You, there—do you know the house of Rebhila, the chief of the musicians ?

SLAVE. Yes, sir.

SARVILAKA. Take my young lady there.

SLAVE. I obey you, sir

MADANIKA I shall do as you wish, my lord. But please be prudent. (*The gharri drives off*)

SARVILAKA. Now it is up to me,

To deliver my friend I shall call up revolution I shall rouse my friends and family. I shall stir up the discontent of nobles, of vintas, of warriors who have won fame by their own valour, and of all those whom the king has offended I shall foment sedition among the king's own retainers And I shall do for my friend that which Yaugandharayana did for King Udayana.

Yes,

Without provocation, my dear friend Aryaka has been thrown into prison by malicious enemies who tremble for their own safety I shall fly to his rescue. He shall be delivered as the disk of the moon is delivered from the rapacious jaws of Rahu. (*Exit*)

SLAVE GIRL (*entering*). My lady, here's news that will please you. A Brahmana sent by the noble Charudatta is waiting to see you

VASANTASENA. Ah, this is a joyful day ! Have a *bandhula* escort him, my girl, show him every mark of consideration, and bring him to me

SLAVE GIRL. I obey, my lady. (*Exit*)

(*Enter Maitreya attended by a Bandhula and a Slave Girl.*)

MAITREYA. Oh, ho ! Ravana, King of Demons, travelled through the air with a flying chariot that he procured by

severe austerities, but I, a Brahmana who have performed no unusual penance, travel with a harlot.

SLAVE GIRL. Behold, sir. Here you see the portal of our house.

MAITREYA (*looking at it with evident admiration*). What a magnificent gateway embellishes the palace of Vasantasena ! The pavement has been sprayed with water, swept clean, and decorated with green paint. The threshold is strewn with fragrant flowers of every variety, cast down as offerings. The summit of the gateway soars aloft as though it were fain to look into the very depths of the sky. Down the walls hang long garlands of jasmine that sway like the restless trunk of Indra's elephant, Airavana. The high, resplendent archway is encrusted with ivory ; and there are innumerable flags of good omen whose long saffron streamers wave in the wind like the fingers of a hand that beckons me to enter . . . . Here in either side magnificent vases of resonant crystal rest on the cornices of the pilasters that support the archway ; and in each vase are symmetrically arranged bright green twigs from mango trees. . . . The panels of the massive doors are made of gold and constellated with eternal diamonds like the breast of a mighty Asura. Truly, this doorway casts an irresistible spell upon a poor man's spirit—it would attract the eyes and compel the mind even of ascetics who have forsworn all mundane joys.

SLAVE GIRL. Enter, sir, enter ! This is the first courtyard.

MAITREYA (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! Here is a quadrangle of palatial buildings that are as splendid as the moon, that glisten like mother-of-pearl, that are as bright as the flowers of the white lotus. The walls have been covered with fragrant chalk-dust. The buildings are adorned with staircases that are covered with gold and inset with all sorts of precious stones. And with their round windows of plate-crystal, from which hang streams of pearls like garlands of flowers, they seem to be the moon-face of a young girl looking down upon Ujjayini. The warder of the gate, luxuriously stretched out, sleeps like a professor of theology . . . . And the ravens, attracted by the offering, cannot find the rice and curds that match the mortar in colour. . . . Lead on, young woman !

SLAVE GIRL. Enter, sir, enter ! This is the second courtyard.

**MAITREYA** (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! In this second courtyard are kept the oxen for carriages. How sleek and strong they are ! —thanks to the grain and pulse-stalks with which they are so abundantly provided ; their horns are polished with oil of sesame. Over here is a zebu, snorting like a nobleman who has just been insulted. Over there I see a ram whose shoulders are being rubbed down like those of a wrestler who has finished a bout. . . . And here are horses whose manes are being combed and plaited. There in the stable is an ape chained like a thief. (*He looks in another direction.*) Over there is an elephant whose mahouts are feeding him balls of rice soaked in oil and ghee. . . . Lead on, young woman !

**SLAVE GIRL.** Enter, sir, enter ! Here is the third courtyard.

**MAITREYA** (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! In this third courtyard are comfortable benches for elegant young gentlemen. This gaming-table, on which I see a half-read book, is equipped with special dice that have been carved from precious stones ! Here and there, holding in their hands pictures painted in many colours, accomplished courtesans and experienced *vitas* are strolling about. These are Kama's statesmen, the masters of amatory war and peace. Lead on, young woman.

**SLAVE GIRL.** Enter, sir, enter ! Here is the fourth courtyard.

**MAITREYA** (*looking about after he has entered.*) Oh, oh ! In this fourth courtyard the drums, beaten by the hands of adolescent girls, rumble like storm clouds ; the cymbals flash like stars that fall from the sky when their merits are exhausted ; and the flutes breathe forth a harmony as soft as the soothing murmur of bees. Elsewhere, a *vina*, like a passionate woman exasperated by jealousy, trembles under the touch of the one in whose lap she lies. And here are young courtesans, chanting melodiously like bees drunken with the honey of new-blown blossoms. And those over there are rehearsing a drama, while these here are reciting poems that describe the raptures of amorous dalliance. . . .

From the windows of the houses hang pitchers of water that are cooled by the breeze. . . . Lead on, young woman !

**SLAVE GIRL.** Enter, sir, enter ! Here is the fifth courtyard.

**MAITREYA** (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! Through

this fifth courtyard blow odours of asafoetida and of ghee which stir up hunger and bring water into a poor man's mouth. The kitchens, in unceasing activity, exhale through the doors which are their mouths puffs of vapour impregnated with varied and exquisite savours. . . . These odours of all kinds of meats and sauces that are being prepared for the table torment me with longing ! . . . Over there a kitchen-slave is washing, like a cast-off garment, the entrails of an animal that is being butchered. And there the cooks are preparing elaborate dishes : the candies are being whipped, the pastries are being placed in the oven. (*to himself*) Oh, if only someone would bring water to wash my feet, and say "Dine !" . . . (*He looks in another direction.*) In truth, this palace, with its troops of jewel-radiant courtesans and bandhulas that resemble Apsaras and Gandharvas, is Heaven itself. . . . And who are you who call yourselves bandhulas ?

THE BANDHULAS Ah, we are

Those who are welcome in houses that are not our own ;  
those who dine at tables that are not our own ; those  
whom our fathers begot on wives that were not their  
own , those who enjoy the wealth that is not their own  
We belong to a nameless species We are the *bandhulas*  
who frolic here like young elephants.

MAITREYA Lead on !

SLAVE GIRL. Enter, sir, enter ! This is the sixth courtyard.

MAITREYA (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! Here in this sixth quadrangle, where gold and gems are fashioned into jewelry, the archways are encrusted with sapphires and are as resplendent as the rainbow. Here I see jewelers who are sorting out all manner of precious stones, such as lapis lazuli, pearls, coral, topazes, sapphires, opals, rubies, and emeralds. Over here they are mounting rubies in gold settings, and fashioning golden ornaments. There they are stringing pearls on red wires. The lapidaries tirelessly polish lapis lazuli ; they bore holes in mother of pearl ; they grind the coral on touchstones. . . . Over there they are drying bags of fresh saffron, they are carefully purifying musk, and they are extracting the essence of sandalwood. And there they are blending perfumes. . . .

Over on that side are courtesans with their lovers to whom betel-leaves and camphor are served ; they exchange lascivious glances ; they laugh ; and they constantly drink fine wines while exclaiming with pleasure. There also are slaves, both male and female ; and there are idlers, men who are accustomed to neglect their children, their wives, and their households, so that they may drain the wine that the courtesans leave in the bottom of their goblets after drinking. . . . Lead on, young woman !

SLAVE GIRL. Enter, sir, enter the seventh courtyard.

MAITREYA (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! In this seventh courtyard there is a dovecot, made from solid trellis-work, where dwell in comfort and happiness pairs of doves whose chief duty is to lavish kisses on each other. The parakeet in his cage speaks as distinctly as a Brahmana who recites the *Vedas* when his stomach is well filled with curds and rice. The love-bird chatters like a slave-girl who is made vain by her master's favour ; while the female *kokila*, her throat soothed by the fragrant syrups of varied fruits, murmurs as softly as an entremetteuse. From brackets along the walls hang long rows of cages. The quails are permitted to quarrel among themselves, the francolins are cackling, and the excited pigeons are flapping their wings. The peacock that seems to be enamelled with precious stones dances joyously as though, by waving his wings, he could cool the sun-drenched palace. (*He looks to the other side*) Pairs of flamingoes, who are like rays of the moon condensed into palpable form, follow in the footsteps of beautiful girls, as though seeking to imitate their graceful movements. Tame cranes walk here and there with a demeanour like that of aged eunuchs. Well, indeed ! This hetaera has collected all species of birds, and, to tell the truth, her palace is like the groves of Indra's paradise. . . . Lead on, young woman !

SLAVE GIRL. Enter, sir, the eighth courtyard.

MAITREYA (*Looking about after he has entered*). Tell me, young woman, who is that man there who, clad in a resplendent mantle of silk and loaded down with magnificent jewels, walks by staggering and swaying on his legs ?

SLAVE GIRL. Sir, he is the brother of my mistress.

MAITREYA. What great merit he must have acquired by austerities to be born as the brother of Vasantasena ! But no :  
 He is like the champak tree, lush, gracile, and perfumed,  
 but growing along the roadway of a cemetery and, therefore,  
 to be shunned by all.

(*He looks to the other side.*) Who is that woman, clad in an embroidered robe and seated on a dais, whose feet, glistening with oil, are thrust into a pair of sandals ?

SLAVE GIRL. Sir, she is the mother of my mistress.

MAITREYA. Ah, what a belly ! One would say that she were an ogress ! Surely they could not have built that magnificent gateway until after they had carted her in like a colossal statue of Siva !

SLAVE GIRL. Shameless wretch ! Can you laugh at the misfortune of our lady-mother ! She is smitten by dropsy.

MAITREYA (*laughing*). O divine Dropsy ! Please bestow on me, a Brahmana, the same favours !

SLAVE GIRL. Death take you, wretch !

MAITREYA. But slave's daughter, it would be much better for Death to attend to that big, liquor-bloated belly over there ! Yes,

When this old grandmother, who got herself into this condition by soaking herself in rum, brandy, and asava, comes to die, there will be enough to make a fine banquet for a thousand jackals.

But tell me, do you have any "boats for rowing ?"

SLAVE GIRL. No, sir, we haven't any.

MAITREYA. Now what did I ask you ? Your vessels are designed to take certain fish. They are built of breasts and hips and thighs and pudenda, and they sail over the ocean of love whose billows are desire. . . . Now, having visited the palace of Vasantasena with its eight quadrangles in which are found so many things worthy of mention, I confess that I have seen in one spot the whole abode of the Thirty-Three Gods, and that my tongue is impotent to describe what I have seen. Can this be the home of a courtesan ? Or have I not had a glimpse of the magnificent palace of Kubera, the god of wealth, himself ? But where is your mistress ?

SLAVE GIRL. She is here in the garden, sir. You may enter.

MAITREYA (*looking about after he has entered*). Oh, oh ! What a beautiful garden ! A multitude of trees support bowers of brilliant blossoms, and under the leafy arches of contiguous trees there are silken hammocks shaped to fit the hips of young girls. Indeed this garden with its golden jasmine, orchid-trees, moon-jasmine, zambak, early jasmine, red amaranth, pearl-flowers, and many other flowers truly overshadows the splendours of Indra's paradise. (*He looks in another direction.*) And here is a pool filled with coral-coloured and scarlet lotus, and radiant as the sky at dawn.

And this asoka tree, with its buds and new-blown flowers—does it not resemble a valiant warrior standing in the midst of battle and covered with his own clotted blood ?

But tell me, girl, where is your mistress ?

SLAVE GIRL. Lower your eyes, sir, and you will see her.

MAITREYA (*perceiving Vasantasena and, going forward*). I salute you, madame.

VASANTASENA (*speaking Sanskrit*). Oh, here is Maitreya ! (*She rises.*) You are welcome sir. Please sit down.

MAITREYA. When you have resumed your seat, madame. (*Both sit down.*)

VASANTASENA. And the excellent son of the chief of the merchants is well ?

MAITREYA. He is quite well, madame.

VASANTASENA. Worthy Maitreya, is it not true that

Friends, like birds, still find a peaceful refuge on that beneficent tree whose buds are virtues, whose trunk is modesty, whose roots are integrity, whose flowers are courtesy, and whose lush fruits are good deeds ?

MAITREYA (*to himself*). The damned coquette knows how to be ingratiating ! (*aloud*) Quite true.

VASANTASENA. What may be the purpose of your visit ?

MAITREYA. This, madame. The noble Charudatta bows before you and begs you to—

VASANTASENA (*clasping her hands*). And what does my lord command ?

MAITREYA.—to learn that he thoughtlessly took your casket of jewels as though it were his own and put it up as security in a gambling-house. He lost it, and the gambling-master, who is a police spy, has gone no one knows where.



SLAVE GIRL. How fortune changes, my lady ! The noble gentleman has become a gambler !

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). What noble pride ! The casket was stolen from him, but he pretends that he lost it at dice. I love him the more for that !

MAITREYA. He begs you, therefore, madame, to accept in its place this necklace of pearls.

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). Should I bring out my jewels ? (*reflecting*) No, not yet.

MAITREYA. Well, madame, do you not accept it ?

VASANTASENA (*smiling graciously and casting a significant glance at her slave girl*). Why should I not accept it, worthy Maitreya ? (*She takes the necklace and places it by her side, to herself.*) Ah ! Even after the sweet flowers have withered, the mango tree still sheds forth its drops of sweet liquid. (*aloud*) Please inform Lord Charudatta, the gambler, that I shall come to visit him this evening

MAITREYA (*to himself*). What ! Is she going to demand something more from him ? (*aloud*) I shall tell him, madame,—(*to himself*)—to break off every connection with this harlot ! (*Exit*)

VASANTASENA. Here, my girl, bring the jewels. We shall go to bear good cheer to Charudatta.

SLAVE GIRL. But see, my lady—see the storm that is gathering suddenly.

VASANTASENA. Let the clouds pile high, let the rain fall ; let the rain pour down unintermittently ! My heart yearns for the one whom I love, and I shall not stop for any obstacle. So bring the necklace, my girl, and come quickly. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

(*Thus Ends the Fourth Act, "Madanika and Sarvilaka"*)

## ACT FIVE

(*Discovered : Charudatta, seated, and pensive.*)

CHARUDATTA (*looking up at the sky*). Behold, the rain squall comes without warning !

The domestic peacocks watch the clouds expectantly and expand their jewelled tails ; the wild swans were about to migrate to other lands, but they linger restlessly, and at last abandon their purpose. The rude and unseasonable storm suddenly overshadows the sky and likewise the heart of one who longs for his beloved.

Yes,

The storm-cloud is black as the belly of a wet zebu, and glistens like the body of a bee. It is clothed in lightnings as in a mantle of yellow silk ; it strides over the sky like another Vishnu come to conquer Heaven, and the flight of cranes seems to be the trumpet that the god holds in his hand.

Yes,

Like Vishnu the clouds tower aloft ; and it is black as the body of the Lord of the Discus. The sinuous line formed by the flying birds outlines the trumpet of the god, and by the lightnings he is clothed in a tunic of bright silk.

The rain-drops, like molten silver, fall from the edges of the cloud, glisten a moment, and are gone. It is as though the spangled fringe of the robe of the sky were scared by the flaring torch of the lightnings, and fell to earth.

The scattered clouds are driven here and there by the wind and joined or formed into manifold and distinct shapes. They are flocks of ruddy geese that fly side by side ; or storks taking wing ; or *makaras* ; or a school of fish suddenly dispersed, or cloud-towered palaces. Thus the wind-torn clouds make of the heavens a ceaselessly changing picture

The sky is darkened by clouds that are massed thickly as the army of the Kauravas. The peacock exults like Duryodhana in the pride of his triumph, while the *kokila* has gone into silent exile like Yudhishtira when he had lost his kingdom in the dice-game, and the swans, like the Pandavas, have fled from the forest-groves to a secret exile unknown to men.

(*reflecting*) But it has been a long time since Maitreya left to call on Vasantasena. Is he not going to return today ?

(*Enter Maitreya.*)

MAITREYA. What a crude and mercenary harlot ! She cut

short the conversation and took the necklace of pearls as though it were some ordinary bauble about which nothing more need be said. All that she offered me was a few brief words. There in the midst of her lavish wealth, she did not even ask me to sit down and rest, or offer me merely a little water in one of her crystal goblets before I left. That accursed harlot ! May I never see her again ! (*cynically*) Yes, truly has it been said : "It is difficult to find a lotus that does not spring from a lotus-bulb ; a tradesman who does not misrepresent his wares ; a goldsmith who does not embezzle ; a village assembly that does not end in a brawl ; and a courtesan who is not predatory." I shall, therefore, find my friend and seek to win him from his infatuation for this female. (*He advances and sees Charudatta.*) Ah, there is my friend, seated in the garden. I shall go to him. (*advancing*) Greetings, sir ; I present every wish for your prosperity. CHARUDATTA (*seeing him*). Oh, there you are, Maitreya, my friend. You are welcome. Please sit down.

MAITREYA. Thank you, I shall.

CHARUDATTA. Well, how did it turn out ?

MAITREYA. All is lost !

CHARUDATTA. What ? She wouldn't accept the necklace of pearls ?

MAITREYA. Alas, how could we have such good luck ? She raised her hand, delicate as a young lotus blossom, to her forehead, and took the necklace.

CHARUDATTA. Then why did you say that all was lost ?

MAITREYA. Don't you think that everything is lost when you have given a necklace of pearls, a treasure engendered by four oceans, to replace a golden ornament of trifling worth which was taken by thieves and which procured for us neither a mouthful of food nor a cup of beverage.

CHARUDATTA. No, no, my friend :

Relying on me, she entrusted to my care that deposit, and the necklace rewards her for the high confidence that she reposed in me.

MAITREYA. I have another complaint, my friend. She made a sign of understanding to one of her maids, and hid her face behind a corner of her tunic to laugh at me. Therefore I, in my capacity as a Brahmana, bow formally before you and

ask you to desist from further contacts with this noxious courtesan. A courtesan is, in truth, like a pebble that has slipped into your shoe ; it is not removed until it has hurt you. And moreover, my friend, it is true that wherever courtesans, elephants, scribes, mendicants, rogues, and donkeys live, there not even weeds can grow.

CHARUDATTA. Friend, enough of these slanderous words !

My very poverty will protect me. And you know that  
The horse breaks away at a gallop, but when his breath  
begins to fail, his feet no longer run so swiftly. The  
mutable instincts of man rush about hither and yon, but  
when they grow weary, they return to rest in the heart.

And, my friend,

When you are rich, this woman is your beloved, for it  
is by money that you secure her affections—*(to himself)*  
No, it is by virtue that one acquires them !—*(aloud)* and  
now that wealth has renounced me, have I not thus  
renounced her ?

MAITREYA *(to himself, looking away)*. He lifts his eyes to the  
heavens and draws deep sighs ; I see clearly that the more  
I seek to turn him from his infatuation, the stronger it  
becomes. Truly it has been said that love and lovers laugh  
at reason. *(aloud)* My friend, she asked me to tell you that  
she will come to see you this evening. I suppose that she  
isn't satisfied with the necklace of pearls and intends to  
ask for still more.

CHARUDATTA. Let her come, my friend. She will depart  
satisfied.

*(Enter Kumbhilaka, a slave.)*

KAMBHILAKA. Now let everyone know that

Every time a drop of water falls from the clouds, it soaks  
the skin of my loins ; and each and every puff of cold wind  
that strikes me makes me shiver right down to my vitals.  
*(He laughs.)*

I play the seven-toned flute with harmony ; I pluck  
echoing music from the seven-stringed *vina* ; and I  
perform vocally as well as a donkey. As far as singing is  
concerned, Tumburu and Narada are not to be compared  
with me.

My mistress, Vasantasena, told me to run along and announce her visit to the noble Charudatta. (*He advances and looks about.*) There is Charudatta in his garden, accompanied by that silly Brahmana. Let's go to them. But what? The gate of the garden is locked. Well, I'll attract that Brahmanical fool's attention! (*He throws a clod at him.*)

MAITREYA What's this? Who is throwing clods at me as though I were a wood-apple hanging on the tree in some walled-in orchard?

CHARUDATTA It was probably dropped by the pigeons that are playing on the cornice of the dovecot.

MAITREYA Ho, there, you accursed pigeon, son of a slave! With my staff I'll bring you down from that dovecot like a ripe fruit from the mango tree! (*He runs, raising his staff.*)

CHARUDATTA (*drawing him back by his sacred cord*). Sit down, my friend, and calm yourself. Leave the poor pigeon in peace beside his mate

KUMBHILAKA Well, that's that! He looks at the pigeon, not at me. I shall have to throw another clod. (*He does so.*)

MAITREYA (*looking about*) Why, there's Kumbhilaka! I must go to him.

(*He opens the gate*) Come, Kumbhilaka, enter and be welcome.

KUMBHILAKA (*entering*). Sir, I salute you.

MAITREYA. And what brings you here in the rain under the threatening sky?

KUMBHILAKA. Well, it is she.

MAITREYA. She? Who?

KUMBHILAKA. She, I say, she.

MAITREYA. What are you talking about, you slave's son, with your "she, she" and your endless whining like an old beggar in a time of famine? Who?

KUMBHILAKA And aren't you like a crow that hovers around the sacrifices to Indra, with your croaking "who, who?"

MAITREYA Come, speak up!

KUMBHILAKA (*to himself*). All right! We'll speak up. (*aloud*)

Well, I am going to pose a question.

MAITREYA. And I am going to pose my foot on your face.

KUMBHILAKA. Well, in the meantime, do you know in what season the mango tree blooms?

MAITREYA. Isn't it in summer, you son of a slave ?

KUMBHILAKA (*shaking with laughter*). Ho, ho ! You don't know !

MAITREYA (*to himself*). What reply should I have made ? (*He ponders.*) Well, I must ask Charudatta. (*aloud*) Wait here a moment. (*He goes to Charudatta.*) My friend, in what season does the mango tree bloom ?

CHARUDATTA. Stupid ! In the springtime.

MAITREYA (*returning to Kumbhilaka*). Well, clown, the answer is *vasanta*.

KUMBHILAKA. Now I'll ask you another question. What protects opulent cities ?

MAITREYA. The police, of course

KUMBHILAKA (*laughing*). Ha, ha ! Ho, ho !

MAITREYA (*to himself*). Once more I don't know what it's all about. (*pondering*) Well, let's consult Charudatta again. (*He goes to him.*) Friend, what protects opulent cities ?

CHARUDATTA. An army, my friend.

MAITREYA (*returning to Kumbhilaka*). Well, slave, the answer is *sena*.

KUMBHILAKA. Now combine the two words and pronounce them together.

MAITREYA. Senavasanta

KUMBHILAKA. No, in other direction.

MAITREYA (*turning round*). Senavasanta.

KUMBHILAKA. No, you idiot, you must transpose the two members.

MAITREYA (*crossing his feet*). Senavasanta.

KUMBHILAKA. What stupidity ! You must transpose the members of the compound, the words !

MAITREYA (*after thinking it over*). Vasantasena !

KUMBHILAKA. Yes, it is she who is coming.

MAITREYA. I shall inform Charudatta. (*He goes to Charudatta.*) Ho, Charudatta, here comes a creditor.

CHARUDATTA. What, a creditor in my house ?

MAITREYA. If he isn't actually in the house, he is certainly at the door, Vasantasena is coming.

CHARUDATTA. Friend, why seek to mislead me ?

MAITREYA. If you don't believe me, ask Kumbhilaka. Ho, Kumbhilaka, you slave's son, come here !

KUMBHILAKA (*coming forward*). I salute you, my lord.

CHARUDATTA. Welcome, my lad, and tell me the truth : is Vasantasena really coming here ?

KUMBHILAKA. Yes, sir, she is coming.

CHARUDATTA. My boy, I never fail to reward the person who brings me good news. Take this for your reward. (*He gives him his cloak.*)

KUMBHILAKA (*accepting it with joy and bowing*). I shall show this to my mistress. (*Exit.*)

MAITREYA. Well, do you understand what brings her there in this unclement weather ?

CHARUDATTA. I am not certain that I understand, my friend.

MAITREYA. Well, as for me, I am certain. She comes to tell you that the necklace of pearls is of little worth, whereas her casket was very valuable, and that she is not satisfied with such compensation and demands additional payment.

CHARUDATTA (*to himself*). She will go away content.

*(Enter Vasantasena. She is brilliantly attired, as befits a woman going to an assignation ; her face is pale with longing. She is followed by a Slave Girl, a Slave who carries an umbrella, and a Vita.)*

VITA (*pointing to Vasantasena*). Behold Sri without her lotus.

Behold the beautiful weapon with which Love conquers the world ; the bane of mothers and wives ; the flower of the flourishing tree of passion. Though her movements are alluring and voluptuous, she does not forget modesty, even while she thinks of the moment of amorous delight. Followed by a host of admirers, she enters the stage on which the play of love will be enacted.

Look, Vasantasena, look :

The clouds where roars the thunder, the clouds whose fluid masses lower about the mountain peaks, are like the heart of a loving woman when she is separated from her beloved. And when the clouds reverberate, the peacocks agitate their wings and beat the air, as with fans fashioned of lustrous jewels.

And moreover,

The frogs that are pelted by the rain drink in the fresh water avidly with their mud-spattered mouths ; and

enamoured peacocks chant with shrill voices ; the *cadamba* trees gleam like torches ; the moon, like a deposit left in the care of a dishonest person who brings shame upon his own family, has been stolen by the clouds ; and the lightning, like a young girl of an impoverished family, knows no moment of rest.

VASANTASENA. Those were beautiful verses, mentor. And listen :

“What matters it to you, meddlesome girl, if my lover delights to caress the cloud-like breasts that cover my bosom !” Thus speaks to me with thunderous iteration the night who, like an angry rival, seeks to bar my path and drive me back.

VITA. Then you may, in turn, hurl reproaches at her.

VASANTASENA. But, mentor, they would be useless. She is a woman and therefore obstinate. Moreover, mentor,

Though the rain descend, though the clouds resound, though the thunderbolt be hurled down, women are not deterred by heat or by cold when they go to rejoin the one whom they love.

VITA. Look, Vasantasena, look :

The storm-cloud is like a conquering king who invades a hostile land : it advances on the wings of the wind ; its flying arrows are heavy drops of rain ; its drums are the rumbling of the thunder ; its banners are the flashes of lightning ; and in the citadel of its vanquished enemy it plunders the moon of its light.

VASANTASENA. This is indeed so, but here is another description :

The very sight of these clouds from whose swollen and protruding womb issues the rumbling of the thunder, and which are like black elephants caparisoned with many-hued lightnings, wounds the heart like a barbed arrow. Why, then, does the doleful crane repeat those words which sound like a dirge to women whose lovers are far off, “Rain ! Rain !” and thus malevolently exacerbate the wound ?

VITA. Excellent, Vasantasena. Look at this.

The sky has assumed the appearance of an elephant in rut ; the flight of cranes is like the white band over his



head, and the lightnings wave about him like plumed fans.

VASANTASENA. Behold, mentor, behold :

These clouds, black as the drenched leaves of the tamarisk tree, have made the sun invisible in the sky ; under the blows of the rain, the ant-hills crumble down like elephants overwhelmed by a shower of arrows ; the lightning gleams like a golden lamp that is carried through a vast palace , and the moon's light, like a coward's wife, has been stolen by the marauding clouds

VITA Behold, Vasantasena, behold :

The thronging clouds plunge into line and become elephants harnessed by girth-bands of lightnings. One would say that, at the order of Indra, they are going to drag away the earth with chains of silver rain-drops. And also, behold :

The driving clouds, filled with the mighty breath of the storm, black as a herd of zebus, flying on their wings of lightning, and convulsed like oceans that are stirred to their very depths, shower down upon the sweet-scented and verdurous earth the swift rain-drops that pierce it like diamond-pointed darts

VASANTASENA. And mentor, behold this :

While the peacocks cry out, distinctly calling to it to come to them ; while the swans, which have forsaken the pools wherein blooms the lotus, regard it with anxious gaze, the cloud, amorously embraced by the swift-flying and passionate cranes, spreads over the sky to stain the horizons as though they were anointed with a black unguent

VITA. Excellent ; but see :

The world, whose lotus-eyes are motionless, for they discern neither day nor night, now when the darkness is for instants dispelled by the flash of lightning, has veiled its face, the sky, and seems to sleep immobile in the depths of its nebulous home, in its lofty palace of rain, and under the vast canopy of swirling vapours.

VASANTASENA. True indeed, mentor ; behold :

The stars are lost like kindness shown to the wicked ; the quarters of the sky, like women separated from their

lovers, have lost their radiance ; and the heavens, as though heated by their internal fires, the levin-bolts of the Master of the Thirty-Three Gods, become molten and drop to the earth in rain.

And also :

The cloud rises and falls, pours out torrents of rain, roars thunderously, and sends down a flood of darkness. With multiple ostentation it displays itself, like a man newly rich.

VITA. Excellent !

It seems that the heavens are ablaze with lightnings and filled with the smoke of dense clouds that writhe like black serpents. The sky seems to laugh aloud with the cries of innumerable cranes, to stagger when Indra's bow releases its swift arrow, the rain-drops, to shout with the articulate voice of thunder, and to quiver with the buffetings of the wind.

VASANTASENA. Insolent cloud ! Having sought to frighten me with "thunderous shouts, you now dare to touch me with your watery hands at the very moment that I am going to the home of my beloved !

O Great Indra !

Was I ever bound by love to you, that you should now berate me with the voice of clouds that roar like lions ? It ill becomes you to bar my path with torrents of rain when I go to the lover who sighs for me

For indeed,

You cruel one---you who, for love of Ahalya, did not hesitate to lie and say, "I am Gautama"--you should know what I suffer and should drive away the clouds.

And moreover :

Though you, O Indra, make the thunder roar and the rain descend, though you hurl down a hundred thunderbolts, you will never be able to halt a woman who is going to rejoin her lover.

If the cloud must thunder, then let him roar his imprecations, for hard are the hearts of men, but you, O Lightning, have you never known the sorrow of a woman's longing ?

VITA. Do not reproach her, madame ; the lightning is your ally :

It is like the gleaming chain of gold swinging at the breast of the mighty Airavata, the celestial elephant ; it is like a bright banner planted on the summit of a mountain ; it is a fair lamp illumined in the palace of Indra to guide you to the home of your beloved.

VASANTASENA. And here, mentor, is his abode.

VITA. You know all the arts of love, and there is nothing that I can teach you or recommend on this occasion ; but my devotion to you leads me to say this : having once entered his house, do not be reserved

If you are too reserved, there will be no gratification , if you have no reserve at all, there will be no desire. You must know how to arouse yourself and your lover, alternately—how to appease him and let him appease you, alternately.

But enough of this ! Ho, there ! Ho, there ! Let the lord Charudatta be told.

That at this hour, when the earth is adorned by incandescent clouds and perfumed by the flowering *cadamba* and spice trees, this woman, exalted by love, joyful, and with long hair drenched by the rain, has come to the home of her beloved. Frightened by the flashing lightning and roaring thunder, she sighs for him, even while she is washing from her feet and ankles the mud that clings to the encircling bracelets

CHARUDATTA (*having heard*). Go to answer, my friend.

MAITREYA. I obey you, sir. (*He salutes Vasantasena with deference*) You are welcome, madame.

VASANTASENA. Sir, I salute you. It is you who are well come. —You, mentor, may keep for yourself the servant who carries the umbrella.

VITA (*to himself*). It is a courteous method of dismissing me (*aloud*) Thank you, madame. Vasantasena,

A courtesan is the bazaar where all vices are sold ; the natural habitat of hypocrisy and dissimulation and deceit and perjury, and the very home of amorous dalliance and lascivious delights. But now you sell your expensive favours for mere courtesy ; may love's ecstasy be your recompense. (*Exit the Vita, attended by the Slave.*)

VASANTASENA. Worthy Maitreya, where is the gambler you were talking about ?

MAITREYA (*to himself*). Alas ! Is that all the respect that she can show my friend ? (*aloud*) He is in the garden, madame.

VASANTASENA. And what place, sir, is your garden ?

MAITREYA. Madame, it is, of course, a place where there is neither food nor drink. (*Vasantasena smiles at his jest.*) Enter, madame.

VASANTASENA (*aside*). My girl, what shall I say to him when I have gone in ?

SLAVE GIRL. Say : "How is the gambler this evening?"

VASANTASENA. Dare I ?

SLAVE GIRL. The occasion will aid you.

MAITREYA. Well, madame, shall you enter ? (*Vasantasena enters, approaches Charudatta, and strikes him lightly with a bouquet of flowers.*)

VASANTASENA. How is the gambler this evening ?

CHARUDATTA (*seeing her*). Ah, here is Vasantasena ! (*He arises joyfully.*) Ah, my dear lady,

Sleep does not come to me in the evening, and I devote the night to sighs ; but this evening in which you come to me, beautiful girl with liquid eyes, brings an end to my sorrow.

Be welcome ! Here are cushions. Will you sit down ?

MAITREYA. Here, madame, please sit down. (*Vasantasena sits down, and after her, the others.*)

CHARUDATTA. See, my friend, see :

From the rain-drenched *cadamba* flower that nestles by her ear, the drops trickle down, so that one of her breasts is anointed like a king's son who is consecrated as heir to his father's throne.

Friend, both of Vasantasena's garments are wet. Tell them to bring others—the finest that we have.

MAITREYA. I shall do so, sir.

SLAVE GIRL. Wait, sir ; I myself shall attend my mistress. (*She does so.*)

MAITREYA (*whispering*). Friend, may I ask this woman a question ?

CHARUDATTA. If you wish.

MAITREYA (*aloud*). What, madame, may be the motive that

leads you to visit us in the midst of this storm that has darkened the sky and concealed the moon from our eyes ?

SLAVE GIRL. My lady, this Brahmana is indiscreet.

VASANTASENA. On the contrary, he is attentive.

SLAVE GIRL. My mistress came to ask what was the value of the pearl necklace—

MAITREYA (*aside to Charudatta*). Well, didn't I tell you that she would pretend that the pearl necklace was of little value while her casket of gold was very expensive ? I told you that she would not be satisfied and would ask for something more.

SLAVE GIRL.—for she thoughtlessly took the necklace as though it were her own and put it up as security in a gambling house. She lost it, and the gambling-master, who is a police spy, has gone no one knows where.

MAITREYA. What is this ? You are repeating word for word what I said !

SLAVE GIRL. And until he be found, please accept in its place this casket of gold. (*She exhibits the jewel-casket ; Maitreya stares at it*) You seem to scrutinize it very carefully. Have you seen it before ?

MAITREYA. No, madame, but it is so skilfully made that it catches my eye.

SLAVE GIRL. Then your eyes deceive you, for it is the very same casket of gold.

MAITREYA (*joyfully*). Oh, my friend, here is the very casket of gold that was stolen from us by thieves

CHARUDATTA My friend,

This is only an imitation of the stratagem which we devised to return the equivalent of the deposit. They are merely trying to deceive us.

MAITREYA No, my friend ; on my word as a Brahmana, it is the same one.

CHARUDATTA. How convenient !

MAITREYA (*whispering*). May I ask how this one was obtained ?

CHARUDATTA. I see no harm in that.

MAITREYA (*whispering to the Slave Girl*). This is what happened. . . .

SLAVE GIRL (*whispering to Maitreya*). This is what happened.

CHARUDATTA. What are you talking about ? Are we to be excluded ?

MAITREYA (*whispering to Charudatta*). This is what happened.

CHARUDATTA. Is it true, girl, that this is the same casket of gold ?

SLAVE GIRL. Quite true, sir.

CHARUDATTA. Girl, I never fail to reward the person who brings me good news. Take this ring for your reward. (*He finds that he has no ring on his fingers, and his gestures indicate that he is overcome by confusion.*

VASANTASENA (*to herself*). I love him only the more.

CHARUDATTA (*aside*). Alas !

Meaningless and vain are the thanks of a destitute man ; his anger and his favour become futile gestures ; from the first moment of poverty, life is worthless

Moreover :

In this world the poor man is like a bird with clipped wings, like a withered tree, like a dry well, like a serpent whose fangs have been extracted

Moreover :

Men who have fallen into poverty are like abandoned houses, like waterless fountains, like blasted trees ; no more can they offer hospitality to their friends, and soon are they forgotten in the world of men.

MAITREYA Enough of these laments ! (*He laughs and says aloud .*) And do you also bring back my bath-robe, madame ?

VASANTASENA. Noble Charudatta, you should not have sent the necklace of pearls as compensation to a person like me.

CHARUDATTA (*with an embarrassed smile*) But, Vasantasena, consider -

Who would have believed the truth of the matter ? Everyone would have regarded me with suspicion, for, in this world, poverty is honourless and wins only distrust

MAITREYA. Well, my girl, are you going to sleep here tonight ?

SLAVE GIRL (*laughing*). Good Maitreya, now you are decidedly too indiscreet.

MAITREYA. Does it not seem to you, my friend, that the God of Storms returns to visit us in the shape of large drops of rain, and wishes to drive us from the place where we are seated ?

CHARUDATTA. Quite true, my friend :

The rain-drops, which pierce the clouds as needle-shaped

roots of the lotus pierce the mirey bottom of a lake, seem to be the tears shed by the sky that mourns for the vanished moon.

Moreover :

The clouds, indigo-hued like the tunic of Balarama, seem to strew over the earth the pearls of Indra's treasure-house. They pour down in large drops that are as pure as the conscience of an honourable man and as swift-darting as the sharp arrows of Arjuna.

And, dear lady, behold :

The sky is anointed with clouds as with a thick layer of an unguent as black as the tamarisk tree ; the fresh and fragrant breezes of the evening arise to cool its brow , and the ardent lightning, displaying her passion for her beloved, the sky, comes to him of her own accord and embraces him.

(*Vasantasena, whose gestures indicate passion, embraces Charudatta, who clasps her in his arms.*) Now, O cloud, roar and rage more fiercely than ever, for by your grace my love-afflicted body thrills to the touch of my beloved and glows with passion like a cadamba flower.

MAITREYA. Shameless cloud ! You are a misbegotten wretch that you thus make Vasantasena tremble with your lightnings !

CHARUDATTA. My friend, the cloud does not deserve your reproaches.

Let the storm rage for a hundred years, let the rain fall and the lightnings flash incessantly, for now I enjoy the embraces of my beloved and the pleasures that are rarely known by men like me

For indeed, my friend,

Happy is the life of the man whose mistress has come to him, and who may warm with his limbs her limbs that are drenched and chilled by the water of the clouds.

Beloved Vasantasena :

I am astonished that this worn and tattered canopy remains standing here on the edge of the weak and shaken masonry, for this frescoed wall is soaked by the falling rain, and its covering of white stucco cracks and falls away.  
(*He looks at the sky.*)

See, beloved, see, the rainbow :

Is it not as though the sky were yawning ? It vibrates its tongue, the lightnings ; it throws out its gigantic arms, the rainbow ; and it opens its vast jaws, the clouds. Come, let us go into the house. (*He arises and takes several steps.*)

The rain as it throbs on the leaves of the palm trees, as it sighs in the branches, as it beats on the rocks, as it hisses in the pools, resounds harmoniously like the tones of a vina that is skilfully played and accompanied by cymbals. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

(*Thus Ends the Fifth Act, "The Rain".*)

## ACT SIX

(*Enter a Slave Girl.*)

SLAVE GIRL. Can it be that my mistress is not yet awake ?

I must go to her room and rouse her from her sleep. (*Vasantasena is discovered, asleep under a coverlet. The Slave Girl approaches her.*) Awaken, awaken, my lady ! It is a clear day.

VASANTASENA (*awakening*). What ? you say it is morning ? Is the night over already ?

SLAVE GIRL. It is day for us, my lady, even if it is still night for you.

VASANTASENA And where has the gambler gone, my girl ?

SLAVE GIRL. My lady, the noble Charudatta went to the old Pushpakarandaka garden, after giving his orders to Vardhamanaka.

VASANTASENA. And what orders did he give him ?

SLAVE GIRL. To hitch up the *gharri* in the early morning and to have it ready to take Vasantasena.

VASANTASENA. And where am I to go, my girl ?

SLAVE GIRL. To join Charudatta, my lady.

VASANTASENA (*embracing the Slave Girl*). Oh, my girl ! I could not see him clearly enough last night, but today I shall see him face to face. . . . Tell me, am I not in the inner apartments ?



SLAVE GIRL. You have entered, my lady, not only the inner apartments, but also the inner heart of everyone.

VASANTASENA. Does not the family of Charudatta lament its loss ?

SLAVE GIRL. It will.

VASANTASENA. When ?

SLAVE GIRL. When you leave, my lady.

VASANTASENA. Then it is for me to feel the first loss. (*She decides.*) My girl, take this necklace of pearls, go to my honourable sister, and beg her to accept it. Tell her that I, vanquished by the virtues of the excellent Charudatta, am henceforth his slave, and therefore her slave ; and that I return to her this ornament which was designed to gleam at her throat.

SLAVE GIRL. But will not Charudatta be angry with my mistress ?

VASANTASENA. Do as I say. He will not be angry.

SLAVE GIRL (*taking the necklace*). I obey, madame. (*Exit. She returns a moment later.*) My lady, the worthy wife of Charudatta told me to tell you that her husband presented this necklace to you, and that it would not be fitting for her to accept it. Her husband, she said, is her greatest treasure and ornament. (*Enter Radanika with Rohasena, Charudatta's son.*)

RADANIKA. Come, my child, let us play with your little cart.

ROHASENA (*pertinently*). I don't want the little clay cart. Radanika ! I want the golden cart

RADANIKA (*sighing*). You know, my child, that there is no gold in our house. When your father becomes wealthy again, then you can play with a golden cart. But I'll take you to see Vasantasena to divert your thoughts. (*She advances.*) I salute you, madame.

VASANTASENA. You are welcome, Radanika. Whose child is this ? He wears no jewels, but his face, beautiful as the crescent moon, charms my heart.

RADANIKA. He is the son of my master, the noble Charudatta ; his name is Rohasena.

VASANTASENA (*holding out her arms*). Come, embrace me, child. (*She takes Rohasena on her lap*) He is the very image of his father.

RADANIKA. Not only in features, it seems to me, but also in character. He is the joy of my master, Charudatta.

VASANTASENA. But why is he weeping ?

RADANIKA. Some time ago he played with a little golden cart that belongs to the son of the owner of the adjacent house ; and when that cart was taken back, he begged to have it again, so I made this little cart of baked clay for him. But he only cries that he does not want a clay cart ; he wants a gold cart.

VASANTASENA. Alas ! Already he finds sorrows in the prosperity of others ! O omnipotent destiny, how you play with men so that their fortunes are as unstable as drops of water that have fallen on the leaf of a lotus ! (*She weeps.*) Don't worry, my child ; you shall have a golden cart to play with.

ROHASENA. Who is this lady, Radanika ?

VASANTASENA. A slave taken by the virtues of your father.

RADANIKA. This lady is your mother, my child.

ROHASENA. You are not telling the truth, Radanika ! If she were my mother, she would not have such beautiful jewels.

VASANTASENA. Child, your naive lips utter cruel words (*Weeping, she removes her jewels.*) There, now I am your mother. Take these ornaments and have a golden cart made for you.

ROHASENA. Go away ! I don't want them—you are crying.

VASANTASENA (*drying her tears*). I shall not cry any more, my child. Go to play. (*She fills the little clay cart with jewels.*) With these, my child, you shall buy yourself a golden cart. (*Exeunt Radanika and Rohasena.*)

(*Enter Vardhamanaka driving a gharri* )

VARDHAMANAKA. Radanika ! Radanika ! Tell our mistress, Vasantasena, that the *gharri* is ready and waiting at the side door.

RADANIKA (*re-entering*). My lady, Vardhamanaka reports that the *gharri* is ready and waiting at the side door.

VASANTASENA. He will have to wait a moment, my girl, until I finish dressing.

RADANIKA (*going out*). Vardhamanaka, you must wait a moment till our lady finishes dressing. (*Exit.*)

VARDHAMANAKA. All right ! All right ! But I have forgotten the cushions for the *gharri* ! I must go get them. . . . But my oxen are restive, irritated by the reins that pass through their nostrils. . . . Well, then, I shall have to go and return with the *gharri*. (*He drives off.*)

VASANTASENA. My girl, bring me the requisite articles. I shall finish my toilet. (*She proceeds to do so.*)

(*Enter a slave, Sthavaraka, driving a gharri.*)

STHAVARAKA. The prince Samsthanaka told me to take this *gharri* and drive with all speed to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens ; so here I am, on my way. Get along, oxen, get along ! (*He looks about as the gharri advances.*) The road is jammed with the carts of peasants. What is to be done ? (*Imperiously.*) Here, here ! Make way ! Make way ! (*He listens to an imagined voice.*) What's that ? He asks to whom this *gharri* belongs ! Why, it is the *gharri* of the prince Samsthanaka, so hurry up and make way ! (*Looking about.*) What's that ? Who is that person who turned and darted back as soon as he saw me, as though he were a gambler sneaking out of a gambling-house, and I were the gambling-master ? Who could that man be ? But what does it matter ? I must be on my way as quickly as possible. Come on, peasants, get out of the road ! Make way there ! What ? He asks me to stop a moment and help him replace his wheel. Ho, ho ! Should I, a driver in the service of the prince Samsthanaka, help you replace your wheel ? Oh well, it's some poor wretch who is all alone. I might as well help him. I'll stop the *gharri* for a moment here at the side door of Charudatta's garden. (*He does so.*) All right ! I'm coming ! (*Exit.*)

SLAVE GIRL. My lady, I hear a sound of wheels. The *gharri* has arrived.

VASANTASENA. Come, my girl, let's go. My heart bids me hasten. Where is the side door ?

SLAVE GIRL. This way, my lady, this way.

VASANTASENA (*going forward*). You may stay here and rest, my girl.

SLAVE GIRL. As you wish my lady. (*Exit.*)

VASANTASENA (*feeling her right eye-lid twitch as she enters the gharri*).

Oh ! What is the meaning of this twitching in my right eye ? Well, the sight of Charudatta will counteract this evil omen. (*Re-enter Sthavaraka*.)

STHAVARAKA. Well, now that I have opened a path among those carts, I can continue on my way. (*He mounts the gharri and drives forward, speaking to himself*.) Why, it seems as though the *gharri* was loaded ! It probably seems that way to me because I exhausted myself in helping with that wheel. Well, we must be on our way. Get along, oxen, get along !

A VOICE (*Offstage*). Ho ! Gatekeepers ! Guards ! At your posts, every man of you ! The son of Gopala has just escaped from his dungeon ! He slew the guard and broke his chains ! He has got out of prison and is making his escape ! Capture him ! Capture him ! (*Aryaka rushes onto the stage ; he is obviously beset by strong emotions ; he drags a chain attached to one ankle ; he covers his face* )

STHAVARAKA (*to himself*). There'll be a great uproar in the city ! Well, I must be on my way as quickly as possible. (*He drives off* )

ARYAKA. I have escaped from the ocean of misery and calamity that engulfs all men—from the dungeons of the king. Now, with part of the chain still fettered to my foot, I wander about like an elephant that has broken its bonds and run away.

Yes, King Palaka, terrified by a mere prophecy, had me arrested in the hamlet in which I lived, and had me chained up in a secret dungeon to await death. But thanks to the efforts of my faithful friend, Sarvilaka, I was able to break my chains and escape. (*He wipes away tears*.)

And then, was I to blame ? If Fate has so ordained, was the transgression mine, that he should have me chained and penned like a wild elephant ? Can a lone man contend with a king ? Can a king conquer Necessity ? Ineluctable are the decrees of Destiny, the Great Monarch whose edicts none can disobey.

But where can I go, outlaw that I am ? (*He looks about*.) Ah ! To whom belongs that house whose side-door stands open ?

This house, with its rimose walls, its door that sags on broken hinges, and its broken bolt, must belong to some worthy householder who is vanquished by misfortune and as miserable as I.

I shall enter his house and await the turn of events.

VOICE (*offstage*). Get along, oxen, get along !

ARYAKA (*listening*). Ah, a *gharri* is coming this way.

It may be occupied by a party of worthy citizens who would not be unfriendly to me ; it may be a woman's carriage, come to await her pleasure ; it may be the carriage of some distinguished person who is sending it out of town , and it may, perhaps, be a vacant *gharri* that Fate has sent to me in my distress. (*Enter Vardhamanaka with his gharri* )

VARDHAMANAKA Well, this time I have the cushions. Ho there, Radanika ! Tell the excellent Vasantasena that her *gharri* is ready and waiting to take her to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens.

ARYAKA (*having heard*) Ah, it is the *gharri* of a courtesan and it is going out of town. I must enter it. (*He goes to the gharri cautiously.*)

VARDHAMANAKA (*listening*). I hear the clinking of the bracelets that encircle her ankles. The lady is here. My lady, these two oxen are irritated by the reins that pass through their nostrils. Will you get in at the back, please ? (*Aryaka enters the gharri* ) I no longer hear the sound of the bracelets that chime with the movement of her lotus feet ; and the *gharri* is loaded. Thus I deduce that the lady has entered and that I may drive on. Get along, oxen, get along. (*He drives forward.*)

VIRAKA (*entering*). Ho, there ! Jaya ! Jayamana ! Chandanaka ! Mangala ! Pushpabhadra ! And all of you !

Up ! To action ! The son of Gopala has escaped from prison ! With one blow he broke his chains and the heart of our king !

Attention ! Attention ! You, there—go stand guard at the gate of the eastern highway ! You, at the western ! You, at the southern ! You, at the northern ! As for me, I shall mount this heap of stones and stand sentinel here with Chandanaka. Here, Chandanaka ! Over here !

(*Enter Chandanaka hurriedly.*)

CHANDANAKA. Ho, there ! Viraka ! Visalya ! Bhimangada !  
Dandakala ! Dandasura ! And all of you !

To action ! Hasten ! Run swiftly ! Don't lose a moment !  
We must prevent the royal authority from passing into  
the hands of another dynasty !

Moreover,

Go quickly and look for him in the public gardens, in the  
assemblies, along the highways, in the crowded parts of  
town, in the market places, in the suburbs, and wherever  
you think he might be !

Well, well ! What do you think about it, Viraka ?  
Tell me frankly. Who broke open the prison and delivered  
the son of Gopala ?

Who was the person who must have been born when the  
sun was in the eighth division of the zodiac, or the moon  
in the fourth, or Venus in the sixth, or Mars in the fifth,

Or Jupiter in the sixth, or Saturn in the ninth ? Who  
was this wretch who dared deliver Gopala's son while  
Chandanaka was still alive ?

VIRAKA. Comrade Chandanaka,

Someone surely aided Gopala's son to escape so suddenly !  
I would take a solemn oath, Chandanaka, that the sun's  
disk was no more than half way above the horizon when  
he escaped.

VARDHAMANAKA. Get along, oxen, get along !

CHANDANAKA (*seeing the gharri*). Oh, ho ! Look there !

There in the middle of the main highway comes an en-  
closed *gharri*. Let's find out to whom it belongs and where  
it is going

VIRAKA (*advancing*). Ho, there, driver ! Stop the *gharri*.  
Tell me, to whom does it belong ? Who is inside ? Where  
is it going ?

VARDHAMANAKA. This *gharri* belongs to the noble Charudatta ;  
it is occupied by the excellent Vasantasena, I am driving  
her to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens, where she will  
meet Charudatta.

CHANDANAKA. Let it pass !

VIRAKA. Without inspecting it ?

CHANDANAKA. Of course !

**VIRAKA.** What makes you so certain ?

**CHANDANAKA.** The name of the noble Charudatta.

**VIRAKA.** Who is this Sir Charudatta, or this Lady Vasantasena, that their vehicles are entitled to pass without inspection ?

**CHANDANAKA.** What ? You don't know Charudatta ? Nor Vasantasena ? If that is so, you know neither the moon nor its radiance in the sky.

Who does not know the noble Charudatta, that lotus of generosity, that moon of virtue, that benefactor of all who are unfortunate, that pearl that is the essence of the four oceans ?

The honourable Vasantasena and Charudatta, that treasure of virtue, are the two who are entitled to the homage of the city which they grace by their presence.

**VIRAKA.** Yes, Chandanaka,

I know very well who Charudatta and Vasantasena are, but while performing my duty to the King, I would not recognize my own father.

**ARYAKA (to himself).** One of these men must have been my kinsman in a former life, and the other, my enemy. Yes, The two men are of the same rank, but each discharges his office according to his propensity, so that they are thus like two fires, one of which is kindled at a marriage-feast, and the other, on a funeral pyre.

**CHANDANAKA.** Well, you who are so vigilant, are you not a captain and do you not enjoy the King's favour ? I'll hold the carriage while you inspect its interior.

**VIRAKA.** Are you not also a captain who enjoys the King's favour ? Do the inspecting yourself.

**CHANDANAKA.** That which I inspect is inspected by you ?

**VIRAKA.** That which you inspect is inspected by King Palaka himself.

**CHANDANAKA.** Ho, driver ! Raise the pole, so that I may enter  
(*Vardhamanaka does so.*)

**ARYAKA (to himself).** Alas ! The guards are about to discover me and I, unfortunate wretch, have no sword. Nevertheless, I shall follow the example of Bhima and my arm shall be a sword. It is better to die defending myself than to be taken and dragged back to prison.

But yet—perhaps the moment for violence has not arrived.

(*Chandanaka mounts the gharri and starts to look inside.*)

ARYAKA. I implore your protection.

CHANDANAKA (*speaking Sanskrit*). He who asks my protection is in safety.

ARYAKA. He who abandons a man placed under his protection will himself be abandoned by the Goddess of Victory, by his friends and by his family, and will become forever a contemptible creature.

CHANDANAKA. Oh ! It's Aryaka, the son of Gopala ! He is in the position of a bird which, fleeing from the hawk, has fallen into the power of the fowler. (*He reflects.*) He is guilty of no crime, he has placed himself under my protection, he is riding in the *ghorri* of Charudatta, and he is the friend of Sarvilaka, to whom I owe my life. . . . But on the other hand, the orders of the King are explicit. What shall I do in this circumstance ? . . . Well, what will be, shall be ! I began by telling him that he was in safety.

It may be that he who heeds the plea of his fellow man will find that death is his reward for delivering another from death—but what of this ? His conduct is none the less virtuous in the eyes of the world. (*He descends from the gharri ; he is obviously confused.*)

I saw the gentleman—no, the gentlewoman, Vasantasena, who protests that it is illegal, that it is outrageous to arrest her thus on the highway when she is on her way to meet the worthy Charudatta.

VIRAKA. Chandanaka, I am becoming suspicious.

CHANDANAKA. What do you mean ?

VIRAKA. You were embarrassed, you stammered, and you said that you saw "the gentlewoman, Vasantasena," after you began by saying, "I saw the gentleman."

That is why I have no confidence in that story.

CHANDANAKA. Bah ! Why should you doubt it ? We are southerners and are accustomed to the various dialects spoken by barbarous peoples, such as the Khashas, the Khattis, the Kadas, the Kadatthas, the Karnatas, the Karnas, the Pravaranas, the Dravidas, the Cholas, the Chinas, the Barbaras, the Kheras, the Khanas, the Mukhas, the Madhughatas, and others of the same sort. That is why we slur our words and say indifferently. "he" and



"she", "gentleman" and gentlewoman." (*speaking Sanskrit*)  
Why this exegesis of each word? Philological distinctions of gender are irrelevant.

VIRAKA. Well, I have the right to make an inspection myself, haven't I? It's the King's orders, and I enjoy his confidence.

CHANDANAKA. And have I lost it?

VIRAKA. Anyway, it's His Majesty's command.

CHANDANAKA (*to himself*). If it is discovered that the noble son of Gopala was trying to escape in this *gharri* of Charudatta's, the King will not spare punishments—the worthy Charudatta himself will be involved. What can I do? (*He reflects a moment.*) Ah, let's start a quarrel in the Karnataka style. (*aloud*) Just a minute, Viraka! You are going to inspect a vehicle that I, Chandanaka, have already inspected? Just who are you?

VIRAKA. Well, and who are you?

CHANDANAKA. A man to whom you owe respect and veneration. Don't you remember your birth?

VIRAKA (*angered*). What do you mean, my birth?

CHANDANAKA. Who should know best?

VIRAKA. Well, speak up!

CHANDANAKA. I would rather not speak about such things. As for me, I know very well what you are by birth, but my good breeding and excessive generosity prevent me from mentioning it, so I shall be silent. Why should anyone take the trouble to crush a wood-apple under his foot?

VIRAKA. Speak up! Explain! (*Chandanaka makes a gesture.*)  
Well, what does that mean?

CHANDANAKA. Holding a flat and broken stone in one hand and wielding the scissors freely, you pulled men's hair into twisted knots—and now you are a captain in the army.

VIRAKA. Well, as for you who wish to be treated with veneration, don't you remember your birth?

CHANDANAKA. Well, what is it? I am Chandanaka whose blood is as pure as the moon.

VIRAKA. Who should know best?

CHANDANAKA. Speak up! Explain! (*Viraka makes a gesture.*)  
Well, what does that mean?

VIRAKA. Listen to this, then.

You come from a fine family : your mother was a kettle-drum, your father was a tabor-drum, your brother was a foul-mouthed crow—and now you are a captain in the army.

CHANDANAKA (*angrily*). What ? I, Chandanaka, am a leather-worker ? Go ahead and inspect the gharri !

VIRAKA. Ho, there ! Driver ! Turn the gharri ; I am going to inspect it.

(*Vardhamanaka obeys ; Viraka is about to enter the vehicle when Chandanaka seizes him by the hair, throws him to the ground, and kicks him repeatedly.*)

VIRAKA (*getting to his feet ; furiously*). So ! You will grab me by the hair and kick me while I am faithfully executing the commands of the King ! Just listen to me : if I don't have you drawn and quartered by a court martial, my name is not Viraka !

CHANDANAKA. Well, if that's what you want to do, on your way to the King's palace of justice ! Why should I pay any attention to a mongrel cur like you ?

VIRAKA. Just so ! (*Exit.*)

CHANDANAKA (*looking around on all sides*). Driver, drive on with your gharri ! If anyone questions you, tell them that this gharri has been inspected and passed by Chandanaka and by Viraka. As for you, worthy Vasantasena, I give you this as a passport. (*He passes in his sword*)

ARYAKA (*taking the sword ; to himself joyfully*). At last I have a sword !

The muscles of my right arm are trembling. All goes well ! I shall be safe !

CHANDANAKA. My lady,

I recognized you and procured a safe-conduct for you ; so remember Chandanaka. For my words sprang not from selfish interest, but from devotion.

ARYAKA. Chandanaka, you whose character shines with the splendour of the moon, by decree of Fate you have today become my friend. I shall remember you when the prophecy is fulfilled.

CHANDANAKA. May Siva, Vishnu, and Brahman, the Sun and the Moon, watch over you ! May you annihilate your enemies as Kali destroyed Sumbha and Nisumbha.

*(Vardhamanaka drives off with the gharri.)*

CHANDANAKA *(looking towards the back of the stage)*. Ah, there, following along on foot, goes my friend, Sarvilaka. Well, that's done ! I have made a dangerous enemy of Viraka, who is a captain and who does enjoy the confidence of the King. . . . Since that is so, I, surrounded by my sons and brothers, must follow the same road. *(Exit.)*

*(Thus Ends the Sixth Act, "The Exchange of Gharri".)*

## ACT SEVEN

*(Enter Charudatta and Maitreya.)*

MAITREYA. Behold, my friend, behold ! How beautiful are the old Pushpakarandaka gardens !

CHARUDATTA. True, indeed, for

The trees exhibit their flowers as merchants spread out their wares ; and the bees flutter about them like fiscal agents that come to collect the tax.

MAITREYA. This boulder was not designed for comfort, but it looks inviting. Shall we sit down and rest ?

CHARUDATTA *(sitting down)* My friend, Vardhamanaka is very late.

MAITREYA. I instructed him to bring Vasantasena and come here as quickly as possible.

CHARUDATTA. Then why doesn't he come ?

Does some slow-moving wagon delay him while he awaits an opportunity to pass it ? Or did a wheel come off, so that he had to stop to repair it ? Or did the reins break ? Or was the road closed for repairs, so that he had to come by another route ? Or does he give the oxen free rein, so that they set their own pace ?

*(Enter Vardhamanaka driving the gharri that contains Aryaka.)*

VARDHAMANAKA. Get along, oxen, get along !

ARYAKA *(to himself)*. I am still in danger. Trembling lest I be discovered by the agents of the king, hampered in my

flight by the chain that drags at my ankle, I entered unobserved this gentleman's *gharri*, but I am no safer than the cuckoo that hides in the nest of the raven.

Well, here I am, a good distance out of town. Should I leap out and hide myself in the depths of this grove? Or should I wait to see the owner of this *gharri*? I had better not try to hide in the grove. The noble Charudatta is said to be a friend of all who appeal to him. Before turning elsewhere, I should go to him and declare myself.

That honourable gentleman will rejoice to learn that I am delivered from the ocean of misfortunes. In the perilous plight in which I find myself, I already owe to the magnanimity of his character the preservation of my life.

VARDHAMANAKA. Here is the garden. Let's drive in. (*He advances.*) Ho, Master Maitreya!

MAITREYA. I have good news for you, my friend. That is Vardhamanaka's voice. Vasantasena has arrived.

CHARUDATTA. Ah! I am happy!

MAITREYA. You son of a slave! Where have you been loitering?

VARDHAMANAKA. Don't be angry with me, Master Maitreya.

I forgot the cushions for the *gharri*, so I had to go back for them, and that is why I am so late.

CHARUDATTA. Vardhamanaka, draw up the *gharri*. Maitreya, my friend, help Vasantasena to alight.

MAITREYA. Bah! Has she chains on her feet that she can't get out herself? (*He arises and opens the back curtain of the gharri.*) What! Here I find Vasantasena masculine instead of Vasantasena feminine!

CHARUDATTA. Enough of your jests, my friend. Lovers have little patience. Well, then, I'll help her out myself. (*He rises.*)

ARYAKA (*peering out*). Ah, there is the owner of the *gharri*! He is as pleasant to see as to hear. I am saved!

CHARUDATTA (*mounting the gharri and looking inside*). Oh! Who is this man?

His arm is like the trunk of an elephant, his shoulder is muscular and round like a lion's, his chest is broad

and well-proportioned, his eyes are elongated, alert, and glistening. How could a man of such noble bearing have been thus mishandled and have had his feet shackled in these chains that drag from them ?

Who are you , sir ?

ARYAKA. I am Aryaka, the son of Gopala. I implore your protection.

CHARUDATTA. You are he whom King Palaka had arrested in an outlying village and thrown into a dungeon ?

ARYAKA. I am he.

CHARUDATTA. Destiny brought you to me. Sooner would I lose my life than forsake you who have asked for my protection. (*Aryaka indicates by gestures that he is pleased.*)

CHARUDATTA. Vardhamanaka, remove the fetters that bind his ankles.

VARDHAMANAKA. I obey you, sir. (*He works.*) There ! The chains are removed, master.

ARYAKA. But gratitude binds me with other and stronger chains.

MAITREYA. On our way, then ! (*to Charudatta*) Now that he is free, we'll find ourselves wearing the fetters in a moment !

CHARUDATTA. For shame ! No more of that !

ARYAKA. Charudatta, my friend, I took a great liberty in thus entering your *gharri*. I beg you to pardon me.

CHARUDATTA. The liberty which you took conferred honour on me.

ARYAKA. With your permission. I shall leave you now.

CHARUDATTA. As you wish.

ARYAKA. Then I shall alight. . . .

CHARUDATTA. No, my friend ; do not. You have just delivered yourself from prison, and you are a person who could not easily make his way unrecognized. This pleasure-garden is frequented by many persons, but a *gharri* will arouse no curiosity. So make use of it in continuing your journey.

ARYAKA. Thank you, sir.

CHARUDATTA. Go in safety to your friends--

ARYAKA. Henceforth you are one of them.

CHARUDATTA. --and remember me in other encounters.

ARYAKA. Sooner would I forget myself.

CHARUDATTA. May the Gods guide your steps.

ARYAKA. To your protection I owe my salvation.

CHARUDATTA. —your happy destiny protects you.

ARYAKA. But you are its manifestation.

CHARUDATTA. King Palaka is making every effort to apprehend you and has called out swarms of guardsmen. I advise you to hasten away swiftly.

ARYAKA. Till we meet again ! (*Exit.*)

CHARUDATTA. What I have just done is not calculated to please the king ; it would not be prudent to remain here an instant longer. Maitreya, throw these chains into the lake at once ; kings see through the eyes of their spies. (*His left eye twitches.*) Friend Maitreya, I am anxious to see Vasantasena, for

Not yet today have I seen my beloved. My left eye twitches, and without cause my frightened heart throbs wildly. Come, let us go. (*He moves forward.*) Ah ! That wandering friar whom I see there is another portent of evil. (*He considers.*) He is coming down this path ; let us leave by the other one. (*Exeunt.*)

*Thus Ends the Seventh Act, "The Escape of Aryaka".*

## ACT EIGHT

*(Enter Friar, holding in his hand a soiled garment.  
He chants a hymn.)*

FRIAR. O benighted men, store up treasure of good deeds !  
Bridle the lustful body, and let the drums of meditation keep you constantly alert, lest the cunning thieves, the sensual appetites, despoil you of the treasure of merits that you have so painstakingly accumulated.

Moreover, let every man, having contemplated the ephemerality of all things that are, seek refuge in the practice of virtue.

He who slays the five senses and overcomes ignorance saves himself ; and he who shatters the illusion of individuality, plunges straightway into Liberation.

Why cleanse the cheeks and head of hair if you cleanse not the mind ? He whose head is shaven must have a soul that is likewise shorn of evil.

But now I must enter the gardens of the brother-in-law of the king and wash in the lotus-pool this garment that has been dyed carmine. As soon as that is done, I shall hasten on my way. (*He advances to perform the intended action.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*offstage*). Stop, you vile beggar ! Stop !

FRIAR (*looking about, frightened*). What's that ? Heaven help me ! It is Samsthanaka, the brother-in-law of the king ! Ever since he was offended by some religious mendicant, he, whenever he catches sight of a friar, has that friar's nose pierced like an ox's, and then drives him away. Where can I find refuge, I who am utterly helpless ? I must trust in the Lord Buddha. He is my refuge.

(*Enter Samsthanaka, sword in hand, followed by the Vita.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Stop, you dirty beggar ! Stop ! I am going to smash your head, just as the head of a red radish is crushed at a drunken revel. (*He strikes the Friar.*)

VITA. Don't you know, you bastard, that it is wrong to strike this religious mendicant who wears the carmine gown of those who have renounced the things of this world ? Leave him in peace ! Behold this garden, sir, should not anyone be able to walk here unmolested ?

These trees, like true noblemen, offer a pleasant refuge to the homeless and unfortunate ; the beauties of the garden are as little concealed as the vices of a scoundrel ; and this fair domain may be enjoyed like a kingdom newly won without war

FRIAR. I salute you, sir. Be not angry, Servant of the Lord.

SAMSTHANAKA. See, mentor ! Just see how he insults me !

VITA. How ?

SAMSTHANAKA. He calls me a servant. Does he think I am a barber ?

VITA. He intended to praise you by calling you the Servant of Buddha

SAMSTHANAKA. Then continue to praise me, beggar. Continue to praise me.

FRIAR. You have a free mind ; you are a pool of virtue.

SAMSTHANAKA. See there, mentor ! He calls me a free thinker

and a pond ! Am I, then, to be called an atheist and a water-hole ?

VITA. Bastard, how can you pretend that it isn't a compliment to be called intelligent and virtuous ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, why does he come here ?

FRIAR. I came to wash this garment.

SAMSTHANAKA. Filthy beggar, this garden of the Pushpakarandaka, the most beautiful of all, was given to me by the husband of my sister. So you come to this lake, where the dogs and jackals drink and where I, who am a hero and scion of the most august nobility, never bathe myself ? You come to wash your stinking rags that have the colour of soap made from rotten beans ! Bah ! I should kill you with a single blow !

VITA. But look, bastard, he has been a mendicant for only a little while.

SAMSTHANAKA. How do you know that, mentor ?

VITA. How ? Just look :

The skin of his scalp that has been shaven is still white ; his coarse red gown has not yet calloused his shoulders. And there is no indication that he has worn it long for the fabric is still stiff, the middle is completely concealed, and the garment has not fitted itself to the shape of the shoulder.

FRIAR. You are right, Servant of the Lord, I have wandered as a religious mendicant for only a little while.

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, why didn't you begin to beg as soon as you were born ? (*He beats the Friar.*)

FRIAR. Glory to Buddha !

VITA. Why beat this unfortunate man ? Let him go on his way.

SAMSTHANAKA. No ! Stop ! I must have a conference.

VITA. With whom ?

SAMSTHANAKA. With my mind !

VITA. Why doesn't he run away ?

SAMSTHANAKA. My darling little mind, my illustrious little dear, tell me, should this mendicant remain or depart ? (*to himself.*) He should not remain ; he should not depart. (*aloud*) Oh, mentor, I have had a conference with my mind, and it says—



VITA. What does it say ?

SAMSTHANAKA. That he should not remain, that he should not depart ; that he should not inhale, that he should not exhale ; that he should be put to death at once.

FRIAR. Glory to Buddha, Refuge of the Helpless !

VITA. Come now, let him go.

SAMSTHANAKA. Subject to one condition.

VITA. And what is that ?

SAMSTHANAKA. That he remove the mud from the bottom of this lake without disturbing the water— or, if he wishes, he may pile the water to one side while he is removing the mud.

VITA. What folly !

The weary earth is burdened with madmen, pieces of wood and stone that have taken the form of flesh and body, whose thoughts are gibberish. (*The Friar makes a gesture of contempt.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. What does he mean ?

VITA. He is celebrating your merits.

SAMSTHANAKA. Ah, praise me ! Continue to praise me ! Always praise me !

(*The Friar repeats the gesture and departs.*)

VITA. Behold, bastard ! How beautiful is this garden !

The trees are bright with flowers and fruits, and strong vines embrace them. Protected by the royal authority and the civil guard, they are like worthy citizens who enjoy perfect happiness in the arms of their wives.

SAMSTHANAKA. Excellently said mentor. Indeed,

The earth is enamelled by a host of flowering plants, the trees bend down under the weight of their blossoms, and monkeys, dangling like vines from the summits of the trees, cavort like bread-fruit.

VITA. Bastard, should we not sit down here on this smooth rock ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Very well, I shall sit down. (*He and the Vita sit down*) Mentor, that Vasantasena always comes back to my mind ; like an insult received from an evil man, she cannot be forgotten.

VITA (*to himself*). Vainly did she repulse him. His mind is fixed on her, for indeed,

A woman's disdain abates or extinguishes love in the heart

of a gentleman, but it only enflames the passions of a vulgar man.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, it has been some time since I ordered my slave, Sthavaraka, to take a *gharri* and come here as quickly as possible. He hasn't arrived yet, and I have been hungry for hours ! I can't walk in the middle of the day ! For behold,

The sun hangs at the zenith ; it is impossible to look at it, for it glowers down like an angry ape. And the earth is parched and cracked like the heart of Gandhari after the death of her hundred sons.

VITA. In truth,

The cows have forsaken the tender grass and doze in the shade, the deer, tormented by thirst, lap avidly the tepid waters of the lake ; the sweltering people abandon the streets of the city ; and the driver, I believe, has stopped his *gharri* somewhere to avoid traversing the burning dust of the highway

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor,

The rays of the sun descend on my head, mentor. The birds, the feathered folk, and the fowls of the air have all retired to the branches of the trees ; people, men, and also human beings all flee from the heat which forces long, hot sighs from them, and they take refuge in their houses, or in their homes

And still my slave doesn't come ! Well, I'll sing a little to amuse myself. (*He sings.*) Well, mentor ? Did you hear my song, mentor ?

VITA. Of course ! You are a veritable Gandharva.

SAMSTHANAKA. And why shouldn't I be a Gandharva ?

I have anointed my throat with sweet-smelling herbs : asafoetida, cumin-seed, cyperus, ginseng, knot-vine, treacle-compound and dried ginger. Should I not have a sweet voice ?

O mentor ! I shall begin all over (*He sings.*) Mentor, mentor ! Did you hear what I sang ?

VITA. Of course You must be a Gandharva.

SAMSTHANAKA. Why shouldn't I be a Gandharva ?

I have eaten kokila-meat sprinkled with pepper, mixed with oil of sesame and clarified butter, and seasoned with

asafœtida. Why shouldn't I have a sweet voice ?

But mentor, isn't that confounded slave going to arrive today ?

VITA. Don't worry, sir, he will come.

(Enter Sthavaraka, driving the gharri which contains  
Vasantasena.)

STHAVARAKA. The sun stands at high noon. I am afraid that Samsthanaka, brother-in-law of the king, will be angry with me. I must hasten on as quickly as possible. Get on, oxen get along !

VASANTASENA. What is this ? That does not sound like Vardhamanaka's voice. What does this mean ? Could the worthy Charudatta, to avoid overworking his own oxen, have sent another driver and another *gharri* ? My right eye twitches, my heart throbs wildly, the horizon seems vacant and the world seems to whirl about me.

SAMSTHANAKA (hearing the creaking of the wheels). Mentor, mentor ! Here comes the *gharri* !

VITA. How do you know ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Can't you see ! It squeaks like an old pig.

VITA (looking). You are right. It has arrived.

SAMSTHANAKA. Have you arrived at last, Sthavaraka, my boy, my slave ?

STHAVARAKA. Yes, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. And the *gharri* also ?

STHAVARAKA. Yes, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. And the oxen, too ?

STHAVARAKA. Yes, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. And you, also ?

STHAVARAKA (laughing). Even so, master.

SAMSTHANAKA. Then bring in the *gharri*.

STHAVARAKA. By what road ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Through this opening where the wall has fallen in.

STHAVARAKA. But, master, that would be to kill the oxen, wreck the *gharri*, and break my neck.

SAMSTHANAKA. Am I not the brother-in-law of the king ? If the oxen are killed, I shall buy others ; if the *gharri* is

wrecked, I shall have another built for me ; and if you break your neck, I shall get another driver.

STHAVARAKA. Yes, but I won't be able to replace myself.

SAMSTHANAKA. No matter what the cost, I want you to drive the *gharri* through that breach in the wall.

STHAVARAKA. All right ! Smash the driver with the *gharri* !

The master can worry about getting another *gharri*—I warned him. (*He drives forward.*) What ? No accident ? Sir, the *gharri* is here

SAMSTHANAKA. The oxen were not broken, the *gharri* is not dead, and you are not wrecked ?

STHAVARAKA. No, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. Come, mentor, let's go to the *gharri*. You are my preceptor, my learned preceptor, my dearest friend, and you must be honoured as though you were my blood-brother ; consequently, you must go first and enter the *gharri* before me

VITA. Very well. (*He starts to enter the gharri.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. No ! Stop ! Was this *gharri* built for your father, that you enter it first ? I am the owner and I shall get in before anyone else.

VITA. But you told me to enter first.

SAMSTHANAKA. Even though I may have said that, you should have been courteous, you should have said, "Enter first, great lord."

VITA. Well then, my good sir, enter !

SAMSTHANAKA. I shall enter. But you, there, Sthavaraka, my boy, my slave, turn the *gharri* around.

STHAVARAKA (*executing the order*). You may enter, master. (*Samsthanaka gets up on the step, peers into the gharri, then, panic-stricken, leaps back.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*throwing his arms about the Vita*). Mentor ! Mentor ! I am killed ! I am killed ! There is a cannibal-demon or a thief in my *gharri* ! If it's a cannibal-demon, we'll both be robbed, and if it's a robber, we'll both be eaten alive !

VITA. Have no fear. Do you imagine that cannibal-demons go riding in ox-drawn *gharris* ? The brilliance of the noon-day has dazzled your eyes and seeing the shadow of Sthavaraka and his robes, you had an hallucination.

SAMSTHANAKA. Ho, Sthavaraka, my boy, my slave ! Are you still alive ?

STHAVARAKA. Yes, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor ! Then there's a woman in the *gharri* ! Go look !

VITA. What ? A woman ?

I shall lower my head and walk on quickly, like oxen whose eyes are pelted by the rain, for though I am accustomed to conduct myself with dignity in all situations, I would hesitate to stare at a woman of noble birth.

VASANTASENA (*astonished, to herself*). Alas ! It is the brother-in-law of the king, the man whose very presence wounds my eyes. Unfortunate that I am, to what misadventures am I now exposed ? My trip here will be like a handful of grain cast into a salt-marsh : It will be blighted. What can I do ?

SAMSTHANAKA. The cowardly old rascal doesn't dare look into the *gharri*. Mentor, look inside.

VITA. Very well ; there is nothing to hinder me

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh ! The jackals fly away and the birds run swiftly ! The mentor has been eaten by her eyes and seen by her teeth ! I must save myself !

VITA (*seeing Vasantasena ; to himself, sadly*). Can it be ? Alas ! The gazelle has come to the tiger.

The female swan steals away from the island where sleeps her mate whose plumage is like the feathery rays of the autumn moon, and delivers herself to the crow.

(*aside to Vasantasena*) Was this necessary, Vasantasena ? Is it worthy of you ?

Having formerly, with honourable motives, repulsed this man, you now—at the order of your mother, perhaps—yield to cupidity—

VASANTASENA. No ! (*She shakes her head.*)

VITA.—and exhibit, it seems to me, the natural fickleness of courtesans. Did I not tell you that a courtesan should receive equally the man whom she loves and the man whom she does not love ?

VASANTASENA. I came here because I entered by mistake the wrong *gharri*. I implore your protection.

VITA. Then fear nothing. Don't worry ; I shall deceive him.

(*to Samsthanaka*) There is indeed, bastard, a cannibal-demon in the *gharri*.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, mentor ! If it's a cannibal-demon, why didn't she rob you ; if it's a thief, why didn't he devour you ?

VITA. Let's not worry about that. Why shouldn't we return to the city, to Ujjayini, on foot, walking through this unbroken expanse of park.

SAMSTHANAKA. Why do you suggest that ?

VITA. This will give the oxen a rest, and ourselves a bit of exercise.

SAMSTHANAKA. Very well, Sthavaraka, my lad, take the *gharri*—No ! Stop ! Stop ! I walk afoot only in the presence of gods and of Brahmans. No no ! I want to go in the *gharri* so that they will see me coming from a distance and say : "there comes His Excellency, the brother-in-law of the king."

VITA (*to himself*). It is difficult to change poison into a salubrious beverage, but we must try it ! (*aloud*) Beyond your expectations, bastard, Vasantasena has come to see you.

VASANTASENA. Heaven help me ! Heaven help me !

SAMSTHANAKA (*joyously*). Oh, mentor, mentor ! She comes to me who am more than a mortal man—who am another Vasudeva.

VITA. Of course.

SAMSTHANAKA. How fortune smiles on me ! Before, I pursued her disrespectfully and provoked her anger ; now I shall throw myself at her feet and beg her pardon.

VITA. That is what you should do.

SAMSTHANAKA. I myself shall fall at her feet. (*approaching Vasantasena*) O my mother, O revered mother, listen to my plea :

Here I am fallen at your feet, beautiful girl with liquid eyes ; I lift clasped hands to you, O lady with ten fingernails and glistening teeth ! If Love's madness made me offend, pardon me, O graceful one, and let me be your slave.

VASANTASENA (*angrily*). Go away ! Ignoble are your words ! (*She spurns him with her foot*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*infuriated*). What ? You dare to touch with the

sole of your foot this head which my mother and my grandmother kissed reverently, and which does not bow even before the gods? —you spurn it as a jackal steps on a carcass that he finds in the forest!

Ho, Sthavaraka! Where did you find this woman?

STHAVARAKA. Master, the highway was blocked with the carts of the peasants and I stopped the *gharri* for a moment at the gate of Charudatta's garden to assist in replacing a wheel. It was then, I imagine, that this woman entered your *gharri*, thinking it her own.

SAMSTHANAKA. What? She didn't come to find me? She entered my *gharri* by mistake? Get out of my *gharri*! You used my oxen to pursue that poverty-stricken lout? Get out, you slave-wench! Get out! Out!

VASANTASENA. You really compliment me when you accuse me of pursuing the noble Charudatta. And what shall be, shall be.

SAMSTHANAKA. With these hands, which are armed with ten finger-nails shaped like lotus-petals, and which are eager to caress you with complimentary blows, I shall seize you by the hair and drag your fair body out of my *gharri*, just as Jatayu did with the wife of Vali.

VITA. One does not drag by the hair women endowed with such virtuous beauty! It is forbidden to strip of their tendrils and vines of the garden!

Get up off the ground! I shall aid her to alight. Vasantasena, deign to descend. (*She descends and draws away to one side.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*to herself*). The flames of rage that her disdainful words enkindled not long ago burn with redoubled fury now that she has spurned me with her foot. Yes, I have decided to kill her. So this is what I'll do. (*aloud*) Mentor, mentor,

Do you want a fine gown with long trailing panels and covered with ornate embroidery? Do you want to eat rare dishes and feast yourself—chuhu, chuhu, chukku, chuhu, chuhu?

VITA. What then?

SAMSTHANAKA. Will you do me a favour?

VITA. Of course, unless it is some rank misdeed.

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, I assure you, mentor, that it has no bad smell—in fact, no devilish odour at all.

VITA. Well, what is it ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Please murder Vasantasena.

VITA (*clapping his hands to his ears*). If I struck down this innocent girl who is the treasure of this city, and who, though a courtesan, has that nobility of soul that one seldom finds in lupanars, what bark would bear me over the Ultimate River ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, as for that, I'll buy you a boat. Moreover, who would see you, if you murdered her here in this deserted garden ?

VITA. Who would see me ? The ten quarters of the world, the nymph of the forest, the moon, the sun whose flaming arrows even now fall about us, the judge of the dead, the winds of heaven, the sky, my own soul, and the earth—all these witnesses of good and evil deeds.

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, if that is so, hide her under the folds of your cloak and then kill her.

VITA. Fool, are you utterly mad ?

SAMSTHANAKA. The old scoundrel is afraid of doing something wrong. Very well, then, I shall command Sthavaraka, my slave. Come here, Sthavaraka, my lad, my man. I'll give you thick bracelets of gold.

STHAVARAKA. And I'll wear them !

SAMSTHANAKA. I'll have a bench of gold made for you.

STHAVARAKA. And I'll sit on it !

SAMSTHANAKA. I'll give you food from my own table.

STHAVARAKA. And I'll eat it !

SAMSTHANAKA. You will be the superintendent over all my slaves.

STHAVARAKA. I will oversee them, master !

SAMSTHANAKA. But listen to my commands.

STHAVARAKA. Master, I will do anything, save a rank misdeed.

SAMSTHANAKA. This has no bad smell.

STHAVARAKA. What then, master ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Murder Vasantasena.

STHAVARAKA. Have mercy on me, master ! I, wretched slave that I am, brought this noble lady here when she entered my *gharri* by mistake.



SAMSTHANAKA. Slave, am I not your master ?

STHAVARAKA. You are the master of my body, sir, but not of my soul. Be merciful, master ; you frighten me.

SAMSTHANAKA. You are my slave. What have you to fear ?

STHAVARAKA. The next world, master.

SAMSTHANAKA. And what is this next world ?

STHAVARAKA. Master, it is the consequence of good and evil deeds.

SAMSTHANAKA. And what is the consequence of good deeds ?

STHAVARAKA. Life as a lord who, like you, possesses great wealth.

SAMSTHANAKA. And of evil deeds ?

STHAVARAKA. A life like mine in which one must eat the bread of servitude. Therefore, I am resolved not to commit an evil deed.

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, so you don't want to kill her ? (*He beats him savagely.*)

STHAVARAKA. You may beat me, sir ; you may kill me ; but you cannot compel me to commit a crime.

Destiny and my sins made me a slave at birth ; I do not wish to fall again into the same misfortune, and therefore I shall refuse to commit a crime.

VASANTASENA. Mentor, I implore your protection.

VITA. Put aside your anger, bastard. Good for you, Sthavaraka, well done !

This slave, though wretched and servile, does not forget the life that must be lived in the next world ; but his master is not like him. Why, I wonder, why are not those who neglect virtue to accumulate evil smitten with instant death ?

Yes,

Inequalities of fortune are the strictest consequences of deeds that have been done ; that is why he is now the slave, and you are the master ; that is why he does not enjoy your prosperity, and you are not now compelled to serve him.

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself*). The old jackal is afraid to do wrong, and this slave from birth is afraid of the next life ; but as for me, what have I to fear ? Am not I the brother-in-law of the king, and a personage of the greatest importance ?

(*aloud*) You, born slave, go ! Return to the anteroom of my chamber, sit down by yourself, and don't budge from there.

STHAVARAKA. I obey you, master. (*going to Vasantasena*) My lady, I can do nothing more. (*Exit.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*looping his girdle*). Stay where you are, Vasantasena ! Stay where you are ! I am going to kill you.

VITA. What ! While I am here ? (*He seizes Samsthanaka by the throat* )

SAMSTHANAKA (*falling to the ground*). Mentor ! He's killing my lordship ! (*He loses consciousness ; then revives.*) Why does he whom I have constantly feasted on fine viands and clarified butter become my enemy at the first opportunity ? (*reflecting*) However, there's still a way. The old jackal is making a sign of understanding to Vasantasena ! I should send him away ; then I'll be able to kill her ! That's it ! (*aloud*) Mentor, no matter what I may have said to you, I had no intention of committing a crime. Why, I am the scion of a family of stupendous nobility ! I said that only to induce her to yield to my desires.

VITA. Why speak of noble birth ? Only virtue counts in these circumstances. The bramble grows thickest in rich soil.

SAMSTHANAKA. Mentor, your presence embarrasses Vasantasena and prevents her from yielding to me ; so withdraw for a little while. . . And Sthavaraka, whom I have beaten, may try to run away , find him and bring him back.

VITA (*to himself*). It is true that Vasantasena may be prevented by her dignity from surrendering herself to this imbecile in my presence. I should leave them alone together, for the pleasures of love can be tasted only in the secrecy of solitude.

(*aloud*) Very well, I shall withdraw.

VASANTASENA (*seizing his cloak*). Didn't I place myself under your protection ?

VITA. Fear nothing, Vasantasena.--Bastard, Vasantasena is a deposit which I entrust to you for safe keeping.

SAMSTHANAKA. Agreed ! I'll attend to her all right.

VITA. You swear ?

SAMSTHANAKA. I swear.

VITA (*walking away*). Still—he's treacherous enough to try to

kill her as soon as I have gone. I'll hide myself for a moment and watch what he is going to do. (*He conceals himself.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. That's done ! Now I shall kill her. But wait ! That old Brahmanical jackal, that sly scoundrel, is quite capable of hiding himself somewhere and, like a true jackal, he might howl. So I must trick him in this way. (*He gathers flowers and adorns himself.*) Dear Vasantasena, dear little maid, you come to me ?

VITA. Ah, he is really in love with her ! Good ! I can go without fear. (*Exit.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. I offer you gold ; I speak to you with flattering words ; I bow before your feet my crowned head ; but nevertheless you reject me, beautiful girl with ivory teeth ! Why do you adore vile beggars ?

VASANTASENA. Is there any cause for hesitation ? (*She bows her head while she speaks the following stanzas.*) Why tempt me with gold, you who are besmirched by the ignominious and foul deeds dictated by your evil nature ? The bees will not forsake the sweet and immaculate lotus.

Though he be poor, the virtuous man of good birth is worthy to be the object of passionate devotion ; and in giving herself to him, a courtesan honours herself.

And I, who have given my love to the fragrant mango tree, shall never seek the *palasa*.

SAMSTHANAKA. You slave-wench, you compare the pauper Charudatta to a mango tree and compare me to a *palasa*—why not to a *suka*. Do you thus multiply insults to me while cultivating your recollection of Charudatta ?

VASANTASENA. How could I avoid remembering the one whom I carry in my heart ?

SAMSTHANAKA. I shall finish with you today—with you and the one whom you carry in your heart. Just wait, beautiful mistress of that damned merchant, that poverty-stricken wretch !

VASANTASENA. Yes, yes. Repeat the title of which I am proud !

SAMSTHANAKA. We'll see ! Let that whore's son, Charudatta, protect you now !

VASANTASENA. He would protect me if he were here.

SAMSTHANAKA. Who is he, then ? Indra ? The son of Vali ? Great Indra ? Karttikeya ? Kalanemi ? Subandhu ? Si-

va ? Asvatthaman ? Jatayu ? Chandakya ? Harischandra ?  
Or Trisanku ?

And even if he were all of them, he couldn't save you from me :

I shall slay you as Chanakya slew Sita in the days of the Bharatas—as Jatayu slew Draupadi. (*He handles her brutally.*)

VASANTASENA. O mother, where are you ? O noble Charudatta, I shall die without having been able to satisfy my love for you. I shall scream loudly—but no, it would be an humiliation for Vasantasena to be heard screaming. Praise to the noble Charudatta !

SAMSTHANAKA. Cry out that name again, you slut ! Cry out ! (*He seizes her by the throat.*) Repeat it, slave-born harlot, repeat it !

VASANTASENA. Praise to the noble Charudatta !

SAMSTHANAKA. And die, you whore, die ! (*He strangles her. Vasantasena falls to the ground motionless.*)

SAMSTHANAKA *joyfully*).

There she is at last. the pernicious creature, that cess-pool of vice, that temple of profligacy ! She came to slake her lust for the wretch of whom she was enamoured ; but he did not come, and instead, she found death awaiting her. Have I not now become a great hero through the power of my arm ? She breathes no more ! She died, even as Sita died in the *Mahabharata*, calling upon her mother.

I have slain the harlot who roused my anger by not desiring me when I desired her ! Thus in the vacant gardens did she cry out suddenly at the sight of the noose ; and betrayed by her love, forsaken by father, brother, and mother, she, like Draupadi, through the prowess of a born hero, came to the end of her life in childless misery.

Ah ! The old jackal is coming back ! I must move away from this spot. (*He does so. Enter the Vita and Sthavaraka.*)

VITA. I have persuaded Sthavaraka to come back. Now I must look for that bastard. (*He advances and looks about.*)

Oh ! Here along the pathway a tree has fallen to the ground. And where it crashed down, it crushed a woman beneath it ! Oh, murderous tree, how could you perpetrate such a crime !

Indeed, guilty wretch, you smote her with your blows, and me with the sight of this evidence of your crime. . . .

This evil omen arouses in my mind apprehension for the safety of Vasantasena. May the gods bring all things to a happy termination ! (*He approaches Samsthanaka.*) Ho, there, bastard ! I have brought Sthavaraka back with me.

SAMSTHANAKA. Welcome, mentor. And Sthavaraka. My man, my son, I am glad to see you.

STHAVARAKA. No doubt !

VITA. Please return that which I entrusted to you

SAMSTHANAKA. But what did you entrust to me ?

VITA. Vasantasena.

SAMSTHANAKA. She is departed.

VITA. By what way ?

SAMSTHANAKA. She followed you.

VITA (*reflecting*). She can't have gone that way.

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, which way did you go ?

VITA. To the east.

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, why, she went to the south.

VITA. And I went to the south !

SAMSTHANAKA. No, it was to the north.

VITA. Your replies are inconsistent I do not understand. Tell me the truth.

SAMSTHANAKA. I swear by my feet and your head, mentor— you may as well make up your mind to it—I killed her

VITA (*with consternation*). Can it be ? What ? You have killed her !

SAMSTHANAKA. If you do not believe my word, behold and admire the first heroic exploit of Samsthanaka, brother-in-law of the king ! (*He points to the body.*)

VITA. Oh ! Wretch that I am ! I am dying ! (*He falls in a swoon.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, well ! That calmed the mentor !

STHAVARAKA. Restore yourself, sir, take heart ! It was I who, by my own negligence, brought her here. I am most to blame for her death.

VITA (*reviving ; sorrowfully*). Alas ! Vasantasena !

The well of loveliness is dry. Love which was incarnate in her has returned to its celestial home. Ah, jewel of jewels ! What beauty adorned that divine countenance !

How she irradiated the joy that springs from amorous delights ! O river of virtue ! O isle of enchantment ! O refuge of *vitas* ! Alas, alas ! The treasury of Love, in which were gathered all the gems of pleasure, is no more.

(*He weeps.*) O misfortune ! O calamity !

What crime can you commit now—now that you have murdered her ? You, vile wretch, have slain the sinless goddess of the city !

(*to himself*) But the bastard is capable of accusing me of the crime that he committed. I must flee from here. (*He starts to walk away. Samsthanaka holds him back.*) Away ! Don't touch me, wretch ! I have seen enough of you I shall depart.

SAMSTHANAKA. Stop ! Now that you have killed Vasantasena, are you trying to escape and have me blamed for this crime ? Should a man of my exalted position be abandoned ?

VITA. You *are* an abandoned scoundrel.

SAMSTHANAKA. I will give you money—a hundred pieces of gold ; I will give you gifts ; I will give you a turban—if only you will help me so that the lasting scandal of this deed will not touch me more than other men.

VITA. Away from me ! That is all I have to say to you.

STHAVARAKA. Heaven help us. (*Samsthanaka laughs* )

VITA. Laugh if you wish ; we are enemies now. I spurn your foul and ignominious friendship. Henceforth I renounce forever all connection with you I discard you as one discards a virtueless and broken bow

SAMSTHANAKA. Come, come, mentor. Let's go back to town and amuse ourselves.

VITA. Though I am still an honourable man, I would be an abandoned scoundrel if I continued to associate with you, and all men would suspect me of complicity in your crime. How could I accompany you, an assassin—you whom the women of the city watch with fearful suspicion from under lowered eyelids.

(*compassionately*) Vasantasena,

May you, fair one, never again be a courtesan, in future lives may you be born into an honourable family endowed with virtue and dignity.

SAMSTHANAKA. Are you trying to escape after murdering Vasantasena in my old Pushpakarandaka gardens? Stop! You shall be taken before the tribunal of my brother-in-law the king. (*He arrests the Vita.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*leaping back, frightened*). Oh, well—if you are afraid, you may go.

VITA (*to himself*). It would not be prudent to remain here. I must go! I shall join Sarvilaka, Chandanaka, and their allies. (*Exit.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Go to perdition! Tell me, Sthavaraka, my son, what have I done?

STHAVARAKA. You have committed a great crime, master.

SAMSTHANAKA. What, slave? You dare pretend that I have committed a crime? (*to himself*) But come now—this is what I shall do. (*He takes off several of his jewels.*) Here, now, take these jewels. I give them to you, and I'll give you jewels every time I wear jewels.

STHAVARAKA. These are ornaments which befit a prince. What use have I for them.

SAMSTHANAKA. Go! Take the oxen and await my return in the tower that overlooks my palace.

STHAVARAKA. I obey you, master. (*Exit.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, the mentor has vanished to take care of himself; as for me, I shall take care to have Sthavaraka imprisoned in the tower that overlooks my palace; thus the deed will remain secret. So I shall go now—but first I had best be sure that she is really dead. If she isn't, I shall have to kill her all over again. (*looking*) No, she is done for. Let's hide her under this cloak. . . . But no! it has my name on it and some worthy citizen might recognize it. Well, here is a heap of fallen leaves, piled up by the wind; I shall hide her under them. (*He does so; then cogitates.*) Yes, that's what I should do! I must go to the tribunal and accuse Charudatta, the son of the merchant-prince. I shall accuse him of having lured Vasantasena into my old Pushpakarandaka gardens, and of having murdered her for her money!

I have devised a new plot to cause the death of Charudatta! It will be a heart-breaking sacrifice of a dumb brute in this sacred city.

Well, let's go. (*He looks ahead with alarm.*) Incredible fate ! Wherever I go, I must encounter that accursed mendicant with his carmine rags. I had his nose pierced for a ring and I drove him away ; so he has become my enemy. If he sees me here, he will tell everyone that I murdered Vasantasena. How can I escape ? (*looking about*) Why not climb over the wall there where it is half demolished ?

Let us make haste and imitate Mahendra who leaped swiftly from Mount Hanumat and, soaring through the air, above earth and the abyss, arrived in Lanka. (*Exit.*  
—*Enter the Friar hurriedly.*)

FRIAR. Now that I have washed my mantle, I shall hang it up to dry on the branch of some tree. But no, the monkeys would tear it. If I spread it out on the ground, the dust will soil it. Where can I lay it out to dry ? (*He looks about.*) Ah, here are some fallen leaves, heaped together by the wind ; I shall spread it over them. (*He does so.*) Glory to Buddha ! (*assuming the proper attitude*) Now I must recite the prescribed invocation. "He who slays the five senses and overcomes ignorance saves himself ; and he who shatters the illusion of individualism, plunges straightway into Liberation." But I have occupied myself sufficiently with Liberation. Before attaining it, I must manifest my gratitude to Vasantasena, that blessed Servant of the Lord. Ever since she redeemed me from the gamblers to whom I owed ten pieces of gold, I have felt myself to be in some measure her slave (*He looks about.*) But what was that ? I seemed to hear a sigh from under the leaves ! But no !

The leaves themselves, heated by the hot atmosphere and moistened by the water that drips from the mantle, rustle as rustle the rustling wings that birds unfold. (*Vasantasena, reviving, thrusts forth one of her hands.*) What is this ? A woman's hand bedecked with glistening jewels. And another ! (*He examines them closely.*) I seem to recognize those hands. Yes, there is no doubt. This is certainly the hand that saved me. Moreover, let's see. (*He removes the leaves and looks at Vasantasena.*) It is, indeed, that Servant of the Lord ! (*Vasantasena gasps for water.*) Yes, she wants water. The lake is distant. What can I do ? Ah ! I shall wring out the water that was soaked



up by the mantle. (*He does so. Vasantasena, who has fully recovered consciousness, sits up ; the Friar fans her with the edge of his mantle.*)

VASANTASENA. Who are you, sir ?

FRIAR. Don't you, Servant of Buddha, recognize me—the man whom you redeemed for ten pieces of gold ?

VASANTASENA. I remember you, but not the incident that you mention, sir. I have been dead since then.

FRIAR. What happened to you, Servant of the Lord ?

VASANTASENA (*bitterly*). What courtesans are exposed to

FRIAR. Arise, Servant of Buddha, arise. Rest your weight on this vine that grows here at the base of the tree. (*He brings the vine within her reach. Vasantasena, grasping the vine, gets to her feet.*) A woman who is my sister in religion dwells in a cloister over there. You may go there and rest for a while, then you may return to your home, Servant of the Lord. Walk slowly, my lady, slowly (*They walk forward ; looking about.*) Make way, sirs, make way. It is a young woman and a friar who lives according to his vows

He who has fettered his hands, his mouth, and all his sensual appetites, is a free man. What matters to him the power of the evanescent dynasties of this world, when he holds Eternity irrevocably in the hollow of his hand ?  
(*Exeunt*)

*Thus Ends the Eighth Act, "The Murder of Vasantasena."*

## ACT NINE

(*Enter a Bailiff.*)

BAILIFF. I have received the orders of the Court to enter the Hall of Sessions and to prepare the seats. So now I have come to carry out these orders. (*He advances and looks about.*) Here is the courtroom ; I shall enter. (*He enters, dusts and arranges the seats.*) There ! The courtroom is in order and the seats are ready. I shall report to the judges. (*He advances, looking about.*) Ah, there comes the brother-

in-law of the king ! He is a perfidious villain and I shall try to pass without being seen. (*He retires to one side.—Enter Samsthanaka, clad in his most sumptuous robes.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. I have immersed myself in the waters, the ripples, the waves ; I have reposed in the garden, the pleasance, the park ; and like a Gandharva, I have sported with the nymphs, the damsels, the maidens.

My hair was done up in tight ringlets, and bound into a high knot, with little curls that dangle about my brow. It is adorned with pearls, and gathered into a mound on the top of my head. Wonderously bedizened and bejewelled, I am the marvellous brother-in-law of the king.

I am like the worm that has crawled into the root of a lotus and looks for a hole to crawl out ; and I have found for myself a spacious opening. Now upon whom shall I place the blame for that horrible little incident ? (*remembering*) Oh, yes ! It's on that beggar Charudatta that I shall place the blame. And moreover, he is so poor that my accusation will seem quite probable. That's it ! I shall enter the Hall of Justice and make formal complaint that Charudatta has assaulted and murdered Vasantasena. Let's enter the courtroom without delay. (*He advances, looking about.*) Well, here is the Hall of Sessions. I shall enter. (*He enters.*) Ah, the seats are all ready. The judges will soon arrive. I shall repose for a few moments in this courtyard of quitch grass and await their coming. (*He sits down.*)

BAILIFF (*advancing on opposite side ; looking ahead*). Here come the judges ; I must meet them (*Enter : The Presiding Judge, surrounded by the Provost of the Merchants, the Scribe, and retinue.*)

JUDGE. Greetings, Provost and Scribe.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. We await your orders, sir.

JUDGE. The decision rendered in a lawsuit must always rest upon a multiplicity of considerations, for a judge can only with the greatest difficulty ascertain the hidden motives of men.

Frequently do we encounter litigation based upon unproven contentions which are not substantiated by the evidence ; but the litigants, blinded by their passions, do not perceive the shortcomings of their case ; and the

king is easily moved by the exaggerated allegations made by those who complain to him. In a word, a judge, even though his integrity be unassailable, may easily incur reprimand.

And also :

We encounter criminal complaints made in spite of wrath and accusations which are not substantiated by the evidence ; but the complainants do not perceive the weakness of their case and, even though the parties be honest men, their errors are only confirmed by the heated exchange of charge and counter-charge, and they go to certain loss. In a word, a judge, though conscientious, may easily incur censure

Yes, a judge must

Be learned in the law, skilled in detecting deceit, endowed with eloquence, patient, impartial both towards his kinsmen and friends and towards his enemies ; he must form no opinion until he has heard all the evidence ; he must protect the weak, punish the guilty, and follow faithfully in the path of duty, undeterred by his personal interest in any given case ; his mind must be a door ever open to the truth ; and he must exert himself to avoid the king's displeasure.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Those who would find defects in your character, sir, would say that moonlight is darkness.

JUDGE. Bailiff, escort us to the Hall of Sessions.

BAILIFF. This way, your Honour. (*They advance.*)

BAILIFF. Here is the courtroom Let the Honourable Judges enter. (*They enter and take their places.*)

JUDGE. Bailiff, go without and see whether any are waiting to plead.

BAILIFF. I obey, sir. (*He goes outside.*) Here ye ! The Honourable Court asks if there are any pleaders.

SAMSTHANAKA (*delighted*). Ah, court is in session. (*He advances pompously.*) I, a person of great importance, a man, brother-in-law to the king, the brother of the king's concubine, I, a divine incarnation, I have a complaint to lay before the court.

BAILIFF (*frightened*). Heavens ! The brother-in-law of the king is the first to present himself before the court. Sir,

wait a moment. I shall inform the judges. (*He returns to the magistrates.*) Your Honours, the brother-in-law of the king has come to present a case before the court.

JUDGE. What ! The first complainant is the brother-in-law of the king ! Like an eclipse in the hour of sunrise, that presages the fall of an important person. Bailiff, we have many cases to consider today ; go out and tell the brother-in-law of the king to go away, for his complaint cannot be heard at this time.

BAILIFF. I obey you, Your Honour. (*He goes out to Samsthanaka.*) Sir, the Court informs you that you may depart, for they cannot hear your case today.

SAMSTHANAKA (*angry*). What ? They will not hear my case at once ? If that is so, I shall inform King Palaka, the husband of my sister, and also my sister, and also my mother ; I shall have this judge dismissed and I shall have him replaced by another. (*He pretends that he is about to leave.*)

BAILIFF. Prince, wait a moment ; I shall bear your reply to the judges. (*He returns to the courtroom*) Your Honour, the brother-in-law of the king became angry and said that he would inform King Palaka, the husband of his sister, and also his sister, and also his mother ; and that he would have you dismissed and replaced by another judge.

JUDGE. One may fear anything from that madman. Return and tell him to enter, for his complaint will be heard at once.

BAILIFF (*returning to Samsthanaka*). Sir, you may enter, for the Court will hear your complaint at once. Please enter, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, ho ! They began by saying that they were too busy, but now they say that they will hear me at once. They are afraid, those honourable judges, and they will listen to everything that I tell them. Well, let's go in. (*He enters and advances toward the judges.*) I say good day to myself ; as for you, I can give you or deny you a good day.

JUDGE (*to himself*). Well, what charming manners our complainant has ! (*aloud*) Please sit down.

SAMSTHANAKA. Bah ! All your places are at my disposal and I shall sit where I please. (*to the Provost*) I'll sit in your place. (*to the Bailiff*) No, in yours. (*placing his hand on*

*the Judge's head*) I shall sit here. (*He sits down on the ground.*)

JUDGE. Do you have a complaint to make ?

SAMSTHANAKA Of course !

JUDGE. Then explain the matter.

SAMSTHANAKA. Now I shall explain the matter to your ears.

Know that I come from a family of stupendous nobility.

My father is the father-in-law of the king ; the king is the son-in-law of my father , I am the brother-in-law of the king ; the king is the husband of my sister.

JUDGE. We know all that.

Why speak of noble birth ? Only virtue counts in these circumstances. The bramble grows thickest in rich soil.

Please explain your case.

SAMSTHANAKA. Here it is. But now, if I am guilty, the King will pardon me. The husband of my sister, pleased with me, gave me for my amusement the most beautiful of all public gardens, the old Pushpakarandaka gardens. I visit it each day and see to it that it is kept in good order, clean, well-tended and trimmed. Now it was due to chance that I saw or didn't see the corpse of a woman who had been murdered.

JUDGE. And did you recognize the victim ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Ah, Noble Judges, how could I fail to recognize that woman who was the ornament of this city and who was adorned with a hundred priceless jewels ? It was Vasantasena who had been strangled to death by the hands of some outlaw who had enticed her into the solitary Pushpakarandaka gardens to rob her for the sake of her money. No, I did—(*He claps his hand over his mouth.*)

JUDGE. The police service of this town is very inefficient ! Provost and Scribe, enter in the record the words : "No, I did it !" That's the first point in this case.

SCRIBE. Yes, Your Honour. (*He writes.*) The entry is made, sir.

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself*). Astounding ! Like the man who gobbled down his rice cakes, I ran right into trouble ! This is what I must do. (*aloud*) But Noble Judges, I was merely going to say that I did not witness the crime. Why jump to conclusions ? (*He blots out with his foot the words that were written down.*)

JUDGE. How do you know, then, that someone had strangled her with his hands, and for the purpose of taking her possessions ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Oh, I deduced that from the appearance of her bare and congested throat and from the absence of valuable ornaments.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. That seems plausible.

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself*). Ah, the danger is over ! I return to life !

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. On whom devolves the responsibility in this case ?

JUDGE. A lawsuit has two aspects.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. What are they ?

JUDGE. We must first consider the allegations, and then determine the facts. The first depends on the testimony of the complainant and of those involved in the case ; the second depends on the decision of the judge.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Then the burden of proof devolves upon the mother of Vasantasena ?

JUDGE. Precisely. Bailiff, quietly, and without alarming her, summon the mother of Vasantasena to appear before this court.

BAILIFF. Yes, Your Honour. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter the Bailiff and the Mother of Vasantasena.*)

BAILIFF. This way, lady, this way.

MOTHER. My daughter went to the home of a friend to profit from her youthful beauty. And now this man—may he enjoy long life—tells me that I am summoned before the judges. I feel as though I would swoon ; my heart pounds. Show me, sir, the way to the courtroom.

BAILIFF. This way, madame, this way. (*They walk forward.*)

BAILIFF. Here is the courtroom. Enter, madame. (*They enter.*)

MOTHER (*advancing*). I salute you, Your Honours.

JUDGE. Madame, you are welcome. Please sit down.

MOTHER. Thank you. (*She sits down*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*contemptuously*). So you have come at last, you old bawd !

JUDGE. You are the mother of Vasantasena ?

MOTHER. I am.

JUDGE. Where is Vasantasena at the present time ?

MOTHER. At the home of a friend.

JUDGE. What is the name of this friend ?

MOTHER (*to herself*). Alas, alas ! I am ashamed to say it.  
(*aloud*) That question might be asked properly by certain persons, but not by a judge.

JUDGE. Do not be so reserved The investigation requires that you answer.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. The investigation requires an answer.  
There is no cause for reticence. Speak !

MOTHER. Oh, the investigation ! If that is so, then listen to me, Noble Judges. On the Square of the Guilds resides an individual who is the grandson of the wealthy chief of the merchants, Vinayadatta, and the son of the noble Sagara-datta, and who bears the auspicious name of Charudatta. It is to his home that my daughter has gone to enjoy the pleasures of youth

SAMSTHANAKA. You hear, Your Honour ? Record that testimony ; it is against Charudatta that my complaint is directed.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. But Charudatta is her friend There is nothing suspicious about that !

JUDGE. Still, Charudatta is involved in this case.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Of course.

JUDGE. Dhandatta, enter in the record that Vasantasena went to the house of the noble Charudatta. That is the first point in our case. But should we summon before us Charudatta himself ? Yes, because the investigation requires it. Bailiff, go to the worthy Charudatta and ask him, naturally, quietly, without alarming him, and with the respect which he deserves, to be so kind as to come here, for the court wishes to see him.

BAILIFF. I obey, Your Honour. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Bailiff and Charudatta* )

BAILIFF. This way, sir, this way.

CHARUDATTA (*thoughtfully*). My family and my character are well known to the king ; but this summons implies that I am the object of certain suspicions.  
(*to himself, doubtfully*)

Can they have learned that the man who was delivered from prison came to me, and that I aided him to escape in my *gharri*? Was the deed reported to the king by the spies who see everything for him? Perhaps that is why I, having been, as it were, apprehended, am being led to court.

But why linger in uncertainty? To the tribunal! Come, bailiff, show me the way to the courtroom.

BAILIFF. This way, sir, this way. (*They advance.*)

CHARUDATTA (*perturbed*). What is this?

A crow cries out with a hoarse voice, the officer of the court repeats his summons, my left eye twitches violently; these evil omens afflict my soul.

BAILIFF. This way, sir. Take your time, sir—don't be disturbed.

CHARUDATTA (*looking about as he advances*). Perched on the withered tree, a raven stares at the sun, and his left eye glitters at me—an unmistakable omen of disaster.

(*looking at the other side*) Oh! A snake!

His body glistens black as crushed collyrium. He was sleeping athwart my path, but now his eyes are glitteringly fixed upon me; his long tongue flickers from his mouth, he displays four white venomous fangs; his belly swells and coils, and angrily he darts at me as I pass.

More omens!

My foot stumbles and slips although the ground is not muddy, my left eye twitches and my left arm throbs repeatedly. And there is another bird! He screams shrilly and reiterates a prediction of a frightful doom. I can no longer doubt.

May the gods bring all things to a happy termination!

BAILIFF. Come, sir, come. Here is the Hall of Sessions. Enter!

CHARUDATTA (*looking about after he has entered*). Ah! What a magnificent and imposing courthouse! Yes,

The royal capitol is like a sea on whose shores pound the waves of public business—a sea peopled by strange creatures: the statesmen lost in meditation are the profound waters; the messengers are the flotsam that is driven about by the waves; the soldiers are the crocodiles and *markaras* that guard its boundaries; the elephants and



war horses are the carnivorous fish that lurk in the depths ; the savage cries of the litigants are like the screams of littoral birds ; and the scribes are the snakes that writhe through the waters.

No matter ! (*As he is about to enter, he strikes his head, and reflects*). Alas ! Another evil omen !

My left eye twitched ; a raven croaked , a snake sought to bar my path. May Destiny be propitious to me ! But come, let us go in (*He enters.*)

JUDGE. Ah, there comes Charudatta. Observe :

His fine features, his aquiline nose, his large, elongated eyes cannot belong to a man who would commit a crime without some great and compelling motive. The physiognomy of an elephant, an ox, a horse, or a man always corresponds to his character

CHARUDATTA. Your Honour, I salute you ; and I greet the other officials

JUDGE (*moved*). You are welcome, sir Bailiff, bring a seat for the noble gentleman.

BAILIFF (*bringing a chair*). Here is a seat, sir Please sit down. (*Charudatta sits down*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*angry*) So you have arrived, you murderer of a woman ! You have come at last ! What a fine, well-conducted court this is ! They offer a seat to this criminal who murders women ! (*disdainfully*) oh, all right ! Let him have a seat !

JUDGE Worthy Charudatta, were you interested in, or attached to, or enamoured of, this woman's daughter ?

CHARUDATTA. What woman's ?

JUDGE. This lady's. (*He designates the Mother of Vasantasena*).

CHARUDATTA (*rising*). Madame, I salute you.

MOTHER. May you enjoy long life, my son. (*to herself*) So this is Charudatta ! My daughter does well to love him

JUDGE. Sir, was this hetaera your mistress ? (*Charudatta makes a gesture of embarrassment.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. From shame or fear he tries to dissemble, and conceal his conduct. He may pretend that he didn't murder a woman to steal her jewels ; My Excellency will not be silent.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Noble Charudatta, please reply. This is no time for delicacy. You are involved in a lawsuit.

CHARUDATTA (*reserved*). Ah, Your Honour, why should I say whether this *hetæra* is my mistress? That is a matter that concerns the emotions of youth, and not the integrity of a man's character.

JUDGE. This case is involved and difficult. Disregard your natural feelings of delicacy. Speak definitely. Tell the truth. Dissimulation is not permitted here.

Do not be embarrassed! The investigation requires an answer.

CHARUDATTA. Your Honour, with whom am I concerned here?

SAMSTHANAKA (*haughtily*). You are concerned with me.

CHARUDATTA. Ah! Concerned with you? Then the matter will be unpleasant.

SAMSTHANAKA. You murderer of a woman! You assassinated Vasantasena who was adorned with a hundred priceless jewels, and now lie like a consummate liar and try to conceal it!

CHARUDATTA. Preposterous! You do not know what you are talking about, wretch!

JUDGE. Enough of this, worthy Charudatta. Tell us the truth. Was this *hetæra* your mistress?

CHARUDATTA. Yes.

JUDGE. Where is Vasantasena, sir?

CHARUDATTA. She has returned home.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. When and how did she return home? Who accompanied her?

CHARUDATTA (*to himself*). Should I admit that she departed secretly?

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Speak, sir!

CHARUDATTA. She returned home. What more can I say?

SAMSTHANAKA. She was enticed into my old Pushpakarandaka garden and there she was strangled and robbed of her jewels; and now you say that she returned home!

CHARUDATTA. You speak like a madman.

Though the waters of heaven moisten it not, your face grows dark as the wing-tips of a blue jay that flies through the rain; your mouth utters only falsehoods, so that it is splotched like a lotus leaf in winter.

JUDGE (*aside*). It is as difficult to blemish the reputation of Charudatta as to uproot the Himalayas, to swim the ocean, or to throw one's arms about the wind.

(*aloud*) How could the noble Charudatta be guilty of this crime ?

His fine features, his aquiline nose, his large, elongated eyes cannot belong to a man who would commit a crime without some great compelling motive. The physiognomy of an elephant, an ox, a horse, or a man always corresponds to his character.

SAMSTHANAKA. Why do you conduct this trial with such partiality ?

JUDGE. Silence, Fool !

If you tried to expound the *Vedas* while belonging to an inferior caste, would not your tongue fall from your mouth ? If you fixed your eyes on the sun at high noon, would they not be blinded ? If you put your hand in a fire, would it not be consumed ? Why does not the earth open to engulf you, now when you try to steal the honour of Charudatta ?

How could the noble Charudatta be guilty of this crime ?

His wealth was like a great ocean that he reduced to a few drops of water by constantly making generous gifts without counting the cost. Is it possible that a man so magnanimous, a peerless treasure of virtue, could have committed for the sake of money a crime so monstrous that it would be repugnant even to a savage enemy ?

SAMSTHANAKA. Why do you conduct this trial with such partiality ?

MOTHER. Wretch ! Charudatta received, as a deposit, a golden casket which was stolen from him by thieves during the night ; he gave to my daughter to replace it a necklace of pearls, a treasure engendered by four oceans. Is this the man who would now commit such a crime to rob her of her ornaments ? Oh my daughter, my child, why do you not come ? (*She weeps.*)

JUDGE. Worthy Charudatta, did Vasantasena return home afoot or in a vehicle ?

CHARUDATTA. I was not there when she left, so I do not know whether she went on foot or in a *gharri*.

(*Enter Viraka ; he is angry.*)

VIRAKA. All night I lamented the humiliation brought upon me by those kicks and insults ; and I writhed in violent rage till at last the darkness gave way to dawn.

Here is the Hall of Sessions. I shall enter. (*He enters.*) I salute you, Your Honour.

JUDGE. Ah, it's Viraka, captain of the civil guard ! And what brings you here, Viraka ?

VIRAKA. This : In the turmoil caused by the escape of Aryaka from prison, and while I was endeavoring to apprehend him, I came upon an enclosed *gharri*. I had my suspicions and, having stopped it, I was about to inspect it, when Captain Chandanaka, whom I had told that, although he had inspected it, I also should inspect it, struck me down and kicked me. This is what happened, Your Honours ; it is for you to decide.

JUDGE. Friend, do you know to whom that *gharri* belonged ?

VIRAKA. According to the statement made by the driver, it was the *gharri* of the worthy Charudatta, who is present here, and was taking Vasantasena to pass the time with him in the old Pushpakarandaka gardens.

SAMSTHANAKA. Do you hear that, gentlemen ?

JUDGE. Alas ! The pure and brilliant moon is devoured by Rahu ! The limpid river is contaminated by the mud washed down from its banks.

Viraka, we will attend to your complaint in due time. Now take a horse, which you will find at the door of the courtroom, ride to the Pushpakarandaka gardens and ascertain whether or not there is in that place the body of a murdered woman.

VIRAKA. I obey, Your Honour. (*Exit.—Then reentering*) I went there and I found a woman's body that had been devoured by the wild beasts.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. How were you able to tell that it was the corpse of a woman ?

VIRAKA. By the hair and by the remains of her hands, arms, and feet.

JUDGE. Alas ! How impenetrable are the problems of this world !

The more one investigates a case, the more it seems obscure. The rules of procedure are clear, but the judicial

mind is nonetheless like a cow that is bogged down in a march.

CHARUDATTA (*to himself*).

Just as bees swarm about the opening flowers and drink the nectar, so misfortunes swarm about the unfortunate man and enter every opening.

JUDGE. Noble Charudatta, I summon you to tell the truth.

CHARUDATTA. When an evil man, jealous of the virtue of others, blinded by his own passions, and determined to precipitate another's ruin, utters falsehoods suggested by his own perversity, should those lies be considered as evidence? No, they should not be heard.

Moreover,

How could I have seized her by her long tresses that are black as the wings of a bee, and put to death a lovely and tearful girl—I who would not seize a flowering vine and strip it of its blossoms?

SAMSTHANAKA. Well, judges, why do you conduct this trial with such partiality? Why do you permit this wretch Charudatta to remain seated even now?

JUDGE. Bailiff, take away his chair. (*The Bailiff obeys this order.*)

CHARUDATTA. Reflect, Noble Judges! Reflect! (*He seats himself on the floor.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself, dancing with delight*). Ah, ha! There he is! The crime that I committed has fallen on his head. Now I can sit in Charudatta's place. (*He does so.*) Look at me, Charudatta, and confess that you killed her.

CHARUDATTA. Ah, Noble Judges!

When an evil man, jealous of the virtue of others, blinded by his own passions, and determined to precipitate another's ruin, utters falsehoods suggested by his innate perversity, should those lies be considered as evidence? No, they should not be heard.

(*Sighs and speaks to himself.*)

Ah, Maitreya, what misfortune has overwhelmed me to-day! Alas, beloved wife, daughter of a family of Brahmanas of unsullied honour! Alas, Rohasena, you do not know of my misfortune and you find in your accustomed games a false happiness, for calamity is upon us!

But I sent Maitreya to the home of Vasantasena to obtain news of her and to return the jewels which she gave my son so that he might buy a toy cart. Why is he gone so long ?

*(Enter Maitreya with the jewels in his possession.)*

MAITREYA. The noble Charudatta sends me to see Vasantasena and to return her jewels. "Good Maitreya," he said to me, "take these jewels which Vasantasena gave to my son Rohasena, before sending him to his mother ; give them back to her and don't let her return them to you." So I am going to the home of Vasantasena. *(As he walks forward, he sees an imagined person.)* Ah, there's Rebhila, the accomplished Rebhila ! Ho, there, Rebhila ! Why are you so preoccupied and downcast ? *(He listens to an imaginary reply.)* What's that ? You say that the noble Charudatta has been taken to court ? Ah, that's a serious matter ! *(He reflects.)* I must go to the courtroom at once ! I can go to Vasantasena's later. *(He looks about as he advances.)* Ah, here is the courtroom. I shall enter. *(He enters)* I salute you, Noble Judges. Where is my friend ?

JUDGE. Is not this he ?

MAITREYA. I wish you happiness, my friend

CHARUDATTA. May your wish come true !

MAITREYA. Peace be with you.

CHARUDATTA. Would that I could regain it !

MAITREYA. Why are you so disturbed, my friend ? And why have you been summoned here ?

CHARUDATTA. My friend,

I am certainly a depraved person who is heedless of the other world, and by me a woman who was in my eyes the very Goddess of Pleasure, was—He will say the rest.

MAITREYA. What will he say ?

CHARUDATTA *(whispering)*. This . . .

MAITREYA. Who says that ?

CHARUDATTA *(indicating Samsthanaka)*. That wretch is the cause of this ; but the God of Death himself must have borne witness against me.

MAITREYA. Why not tell them that she returned home ?

CHARUDATTA. I did, but in vain. I am not believed because I am poor.

MAITREYA. What, gentlemen ? This is the man to whose great liberality the city of Ujjayini owes so many of its beauties—hospices, cloisters, pleasure gardens, temples, lakes and fountains ; could he have committed such a crime to obtain a few paltry jewels ? (*angrily*) And you, Samsthanaka, brother-in-law of the king, son of an adultress, debauched profligate, storehouse of all vices known to humanity,—you are tricked out with golden ornaments, I dare you to say before me that my friend, who refuses to pluck a flower from the jasmine vine lest he destroy the buds, has committed a crime like this, that is held in horror in the two worlds. Just wait ! Wait, you son of a procuress ! With this staff which is as knotty and warped as your soul, I shall smash your head into a hundred pieces !

SAMSTHANAKA (*angry*). Listen, Noble Judges, listen to him ! This quarrel—I mean, this lawsuit is between me and Charudatta. What right has this person, whose skull is as bare as a crow's claw, to threaten to shatter my head into a hundred pieces ? Away with you, you miscreant, you son of a slave, you Brahmanical scoundrel. (*Maitreya brandishes his staff and repeats his invective, Samsthanaka leaps up and strikes him. Maitreya beats Samsthanaka, but the jewels which he carries in the bosom of his robe fall to the floor* )

SAMSTHANAKA (*seizing the jewels and regarding them with astonishment*). Behold, gentlemen, behold ! Here are the jewels of the victim ! (*turning to Charudatta*) It was for these trinkets that he strangled her and murdered her ! (*The judges bow low their heads in silence* )

CHARUDATTA (*aside*). The fall of these jewels, their appearance at such a moment, can be only a manifestation of the malignity of a Destiny resolved to precipitate my downfall.

MAITREYA. Why not explain the whole affair, my friend ?

CHARUDATTA. My friend,

In this situation, the dull eye of the king is incapable of discerning the truth ; in my unfortunate plight, all my pleas can lead only to shameful death.

JUDGE. Alas ! Alas !

Jupiter in conflict with Mars is vanquished, now that a new planet, like a blazing comet, has appeared beside him.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE (*examining the jewels ; to the Mother of Vasantasena*).

Madame, examine these golden ornaments and tell us whether or not they are your daughter's.

MOTHER (*examining them*). They are like hers, but they are not hers.

SAMSTHANAKA. Nonsense, you old bawd ! Your eyes declare what your lips deny.

MOTHER. Silence, wretch ! Away from me !

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Consider well what you say Are not these jewels your daughter's ?

MOTHER. The craftsmanship is remarkable, gentlemen, and holds one's attention, but these are not her jewels.

JUDGE. Madame, do you identify these jewels ?

MOTHER. I have already told you that I do not. It is possible, however, that they may have been made by the same goldsmith.

JUDGE. Look at them, Provost.

Different jewels may indeed resemble one another in form, style and workmanship, the goldsmiths copy designs that they have seen, and it is known that the artisan by his dexterity often duplicates work that he has done.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Do these jewels belong to you, Noble Charudatta ?

CHARUDATTA. No—no, indeed

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Whose are they ?

CHARUDATTA. They belong to this lady's daughter

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. How do they come to be out of her possession ?

CHARUDATTA. They are out of her possession. That's all there is to it.

PROVOST AND SCRIBE. Worthv Charudatta, tell the truth.

Do not forget that Truth wins happiness ; he who tells truth avoids sin. Truth is the sacred syllable of eternity ; it must not be concealed behind a veil of lies.

CHARUDATTA. I do not recognize these jewels as belonging to me, but I do recognize them as having come from my house.

SAMSTHANAKA. You enticed her to the garden where you murdered her ; now you are resorting to subterfuge to hide your crime.



JUDGE. Worthy Charudatta, I summon you to tell the truth. For otherwise on your shoulders will fall the grievous guilt and shame ; and likewise our earnest wishes will fall to the ground.

CHARUDATTA. I am the son of an honourable family and I am not guilty. What does it matter to me : I am believed guilty ; I know that I am innocent.

(*to himself*) And moreover, if I am deprived of Vasantasena, I have no further use for life. (*aloud*) Why discourse at length ?

I am, it is said, a depraved person who is heedless of the two worlds, and by me an excellent and beautiful woman, Pleasure incarnate, was—He will say the rest.

SAMSTHANAKA. Was murdered ! Say it yourself : "murdered."

CHARUDATTA. As you say.

SAMSTHANAKA. You hear, gentlemen, you hear ! He killed her ! His own confession removes all possibility of doubt. I demand that the body of Charudatta the pauper be taken into custody.

JUDGE. Bailiff, the prince is right. Ho ! Guards ! Place Charudatta under arrest. (*The civil guards obey.*)

MOTHER. Stop, Noble Judges ! Be merciful ! Charudatta received, as a deposit, a golden casket which was stolen from him by thieves during the night ; he gave to my daughter to replace it a necklace of pearls, a treasure engendered by four oceans. Is this the man who would now commit such a crime as to rob her of her ornaments ? Oh my daughter, my child, why do you not come ? —If my daughter is dead, let him live. I beg you to do this. Moreover, every lawsuit is a case between a complainant and an accused. Here I am the complainant. I ask you to release him.

SAMSTHANAKA. Away with you, slave-born slut ! It is no longer any of your business.

JUDGE. Madame, you must go. Ho, guards ! Take her away !

MOTHER (*weeping*). Oh, my daughter, my son ! (*Exit, weeping.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself*). I have handled this affair in a manner worthy of my talents. I can go now. (*Exit.*)

JUDGE. Sir Charudatta, it is our province to decide on the facts ; the rest devolves upon the king. Bailiff, report to King Palaka

That the convicted man is a Brahmana ; that, in conformity with the Code of Manu, his life and property are inviolable ; that he may be punished only by exile from the kingdom.

BAILIFF. I obey, Your Honour. (*Exit. He re-enters, weeping.*)  
Sirs, I have delivered the report. King Palaka decrees that since the convicted man murdered Vasantasena for mere money, the jewels which were the cause of the crime shall be hung about his neck ; that he shall be conducted publicly and with the sound of drums to the Southern Cemetery ; and that, in the place aforesaid, he shall be impaled. Who-soever perpetrates a similar crime shall be punished with the same dreadful penalty

CHARUDATTA. Alas ! How rashly King Palaka has acted !  
Indeed,

To such rash decisions the kings of this world are exposed by their office and impelled by their ministers ; and thus do they go down to a dire and ineluctable doom

And moreover :

Like white crows, evil counselors hover about the thrones and seduce the minds of kings ; they have slain, and daily slay, thousands of guiltless persons.

Maitreya, my friend, go now. Bear my ultimate and solemn farewell to the mother, and become the protector of my son, Rohasena.

MAITREYA. Alas ! How can the tree live after its roots are destroyed ?

CHARUDATTA. Do not say that.

When a man departs into another world, his son is the continuation of his life in this world ; give to Rohasena the friendship that you feel for me.

MAITREYA. I shall be your devoted friend ; the life that you leave unfinished shall be completed.

CHARUDATTA. Help me to see Rohasena once more, if for but a moment.

MAITREYA. Of course, I shall.

JUDGE. Bailiff, take this young man away. (*The Bailiff comes forward to obey this order.*) Ho, there ! Summon the executioners ! (*The judges rise and depart ; the guards are leading Charudatta away.*)

CHARUDATTA. Ah, Maitreya, what misfortune has overwhelmed me today ! Alas, my beloved wife, daughter of a family of Brahmans of unsullied honour ! Alas, Rohasena, you do not know of my misfortune and you find in your accustomed games a false happiness, for calamity is upon us !

O King ! Had you based your judgment on the ordeal of poison, or of water, or of the balances, or of fire, you could have me dismembered by the saw. But now that you, relying on the testimony of my enemy, deliver me, a Brahmana, to the executioners, you have damned yourself and your children and your children's children to torment in the nethermost depths of Hell.

I am ready. (*Excunt omnes.*)

*Thus Ends the Ninth Act, "The Trial."*

## ACT TEN

(*Enter Charudatta escorted by two Chandalas.*)

BOTH CHANDALAS. Hear ye—ye who delight in observing the many methods and the latest modes of fettering and executing men : behold the execution that is about to take place ! Here we are, two executioners who are skilful in decapitating, and efficient in impaling, criminals.

Make way, sirs, make way ! It is the worthy Charudatta. He wears a garland of oleander blossoms ; he is in the hands of the executioners—in our hands ; and he advances gently toward his end like a lamp whose oil will soon be exhausted.

CHARUDATTA (*despondently*). My face is wet with tears ; my limbs are covered with dry dust ; my body is adorned with flowers gathered in the cemeteries ; it is a sacrificial offering and the birds of prey scream raucously and prepare to feast on it as soon as it is seasoned with a sauce of blood. •

THE CHANDALAS. Make way, sirs, make way.

What are you so eager to see ? An honourable man, a tree where all honest men, like birds, found refuge, will be cut down by those who carry the axe of the god of death.

Come, Charudatta, come, sir.

CHARUDATTA. Now I find myself in this plight, for the sudden vicissitudes ordained by Destiny cannot be foreseen.

All my limbs are streaked and smeared with red santal ;  
I am covered with flour and meal ; I who was once a man,  
have become a sacrificial victim.

(*Looking about*) Ah, how great the difference in human fortunes ! Seeing me in this terrible situation, the citizens are moved to tears and they deplore the desperate peripeties of human destiny ; unable to aid me in this world, they wish me happiness in the next.

THE CHANDALAS. Make way, sirs, make way ! What do you want to see ? There are four things which no man should observe : the banners of Indra passing through the sky, a cow when she brings forth a calf, a star that falls from heaven, and an honourable man when he goes to his doom.

ONE CHANDALA. Behold, Ahinta, behold :

When, at the decree of Destiny, the noblest of the citizens is led to his death, do not the heavens weep and the lightnings flash in a cloudless sky ?

THE OTHER. No, Goha,

The heavens do not weep and the lightnings do not flash in a cloudless sky : the cloud is this throng of women, and the rain is the tears that stream from their eyes.

Indeed,

All men weep as they see the doomed man led away to execution and the tears that are shed dampen the highway so that the dust does not rise beneath our feet.

CHARUDATTA (*looking about, mournfully*). These women, who have their heads thrust halfway out of the windows of their houses, shed rivulets of tears and bewail the fate of the unfortunate Charudatta.

THE CHANDALAS. Come, Charudatta, come. Here is a place where proclamations are made. We must beat the drums and announce the sentence. (*They beat their drums.*) Attention, sirs, attention ! This man is the noble Charudatta ; he is the son of the worthy Sagaradatta, the grandson of Vinaya-

datta, the wealthy merchant-prince. He committed a crime by strangling with his hands, for the purpose of stealing her jewels, Vasantasena the hetaera, whom he had enticed into the old Pushpakarandaka gardens, which were, at that hour, unfrequented. He was captured while in possession of the stolen property, and he was convicted on his own testimony. We, therefore, by the order of King Palaka, shall execute him. Whoever commits a crime equally reprehensible in this world and in the next, will be punished in the same manner by King Palaka.

CHARUDATTA (*to himself ; despondently*). The name of my family, purified by countless oblations, was once celebrated in the solemn precincts of the temples with the aid of prayers taken from the *Vedas* and oft repeated in circumambulation about the sacred flame ; but now, when I am about to die, that name is befouled and spoken in a public proclamation by men belonging to the most abject caste

(*He claps his hands over his ears and looks at the sky*) Oh, Vasantasena,

You whose teeth are bright as the clear rays of the moon, you whose lips are like crimson coral ; why must I, after sipping the nectar of your mouth, be constrained to drink the bitter poison of disgrace ?

BOTH CHANDALAS. Make way, sirs, make way.

The treasury that contained the pearls of virtue, the high bridge that bore all worthy men over the river of misfortune, the living ornament of this city, perishes today.

Indeed,

All men in this world are benevolently disposed towards those who are prosperous, but seldom does anyone appear to befriend unfortunate men who have fallen on evil days.

CHARUDATTA (*looking about*).

I see friends who hasten away, hiding their faces under the edge of their cloaks. When a man is prosperous, even his enemies are his friends ; but when a man encounters adversity, he has no friends.

THE CHANDALAS. They have made way, and the highway lies open before us. We must go on with the man who bears the emblems of one who is condemned to die.

CHARUDATTA. Ah, Maitreya, what misfortune has overwhelmed me today ! Alas,

Beloved wife, daughter of a family of Brahmans of unsullied honour ! Ah, Rohasena, you do not know my misfortune and you find in your accustomed games a false happiness, for calamity is upon us !

VOICES (*offstage*). O my father ! O my dear friend !

CHARUDATTA (*having heard ; with emotion*). O you who are the noblest of your caste, I beg you to do me a kindness.

THE CHANDALAS. If you would accept something from men of our degraded rank

CHARUDATTA. What a shame ! A Chandala has a greater sense of propriety than the ferocious King Palaka ! I wish to see again the face of my son, that I may be happy in the other world.

THE CHANDALAS. It shall be done

VOICE (*offstage*). O my father ! O my dear father !

CHARUDATTA (*mournfully repeats*). O you who are the noblest of your caste, I beg you to do me a kindness.

THE CHANDALAS. Make way, sirs, make way so that the noble Charudatta may see his son. (*turning towards the region offstage*) This way, sir, this way ! Come over here, child ! (*Enter Maitreya, leading Rohasena.*)

MAITREYA. Hasten, my child, hasten ! They are leading your father to execution.

ROHASENA. O my father ! O my dear father !

MAITREYA. Alas, my friend ! When shall I ever see you again ?

CHARUDATTA (*seeing them*). Ah, my son ! And Maitreya ! (*sadly*) Alas !

Long will thirst torment me in the other world ; meagre indeed will be the offerings of water and food.

What can I give to my son ? (*After examining his person, he perceives his Brahmanic cord.*) Yes, this is still mine.

This insignia of Brahmanhood is adorned neither with pearls nor with gold, but it confers the power to render to the gods and to ancestors that which is due them. (*He gives his Brahmanic cord to Rohasena.*)

ONE CHANDALA. Come along, Charudatta, get a move on !

THE OTHER. What ? How dare you address discourteously the noble Charudatta ? Never forget that

Over the hills of prosperity and through the valleys of doom, night and day, Destiny, like a riderless horse, runs on toward the goal that is known to it alone.

And moreover,

Has his name become meaningless, that we need no longer honour him and bow our heads before him? Is not the moon entitled to the veneration of men, even at the moment of eclipse, when Rahu is about to devour it?

ROHASENA. O Chandalas, where are you taking my father?

CHARUDATTA. My child,

Like a goat that is dragged to the altar of immolation, I go to the place of execution, with a garland of oleander blossoms on one shoulder, the sharp pike on the other, and despair in my heart.

ONE CHANDALA. Child,

Though we are born into an abject caste, we are not criminals; the real Chandalas are the depraved persons who molest honourable men.

ROHASENA. Why are you going to kill my father?

CHANDALA. It is the order of the king. His is the responsibility; we are not to blame.

ROHASENA. Let my father go and execute me instead.

CHANDALA. He who speaks thus merits long life.

CHARUDATTA (*weeping as he embraces Rohasena*) Such love is a treasure that both rich and poor may own; fragrant without nard or sandalwood, it is a balm that soothes the heart.

Like a goat that is dragged to the altar of immolation, I go to the place of execution, with a garland of oleander blossoms on one shoulder, the sharp pike on the other, and despair in my heart. (*to himself*) I see friends who hasten away, hiding their faces under the edge of their cloaks. When a man is prosperous, even his enemies are his friends; but when a man encounters adversity, he has no friends.

MAITREYA. Come now, my good men, let my friend escape and execute me in his stead.

CHARUDATTA. Heaven forbid! (*looking about; to himself*) I thought I no longer had friends. When a man is in adversity he has no friends.

These women, who have thrust their heads halfway out of the windows of their houses, shed rivulets of tears and bewail the fate of the unfortunate Charudatta.

CHANDALA. Make way, sirs, make way.

What are you so eager to see? An honourable man who, finding himself dishonoured, has lost the desire to live? He is like a golden pitcher that plunges down into the well when the cord on which it is suspended is cut.

CHARUDATTA. You whose teeth are bright as the clear rays of the moon, you whose lips are like crimson coral; why must I, after sipping the nectar of your mouth, be constrained to drink the bitter poison of disgrace?

THE OTHER CHANDALA. Here we must repeat the proclamation. (*One Chandala repeats the proclamation.*)

CHARUDATTA. Misfortune has brought me to a shameful plight that is like a tree whose ripe fruit will be death; but what wounds me most of all in this proclamation is to hear it said that I killed her.

(*Sthavaraka, fettered, appears at a window in the tower of the palace.*)

STHAVARAKA (*having listened, with consternation*). What? The innocent Charudatta is going to die? And I am held by the chains with which my master had me fettered! I can only shout. Listen, everyone, listen! I am to blame! It was through my blindness that Vasantasena got into the wrong *gharri* and was driven to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens, there my master, because she spurned his caresses, strangled her with his hands. It was not the noble Charudatta! Alas! I am too far away; no one hears me. What can I do? (*He reflects.*) I must leap down to the ground. Only thus can I save Charudatta from execution. That's it! I shall leap down from this tower—out through the old round window. It were better that injury came to me, than to the noble Charudatta, that tree which shelters so many birds, honest men. And if I die in the attempt, I shall find myself in the world of the blessed. (*He leaps.*) Ah, ah! I am not injured. My chains are broken! Now I must hasten to the place where the Chandala made the proclamation. (*He hastens forward, and sees the Chandalas.*) Ho, there! Chandalas! Way! Make way!



CHANDALAS. What's this? Who shouted to make way?

STHAVARAKA. Listen, everyone, listen! I am to blame!

It was through my blunder that Vasantasena got into the wrong *gharri* and was driven to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens; there my master, because she spurned his caresses, strangled her with his hands. It was not the noble Charudatta!

CHARUDATTA. Ah!

Who is this man who, at the moment that my head passes into the noose of Time, arrives like a cloud that sheds abundant rain on the fields that were seared by drought?

You have heard him!

I was not death that frightened me, but only the blot on my reputation; and were that dishonour effaced, death would be dear to me as the birth of a son.

Moreover,

Like a poisoned arrow, a debased wretch struck me down, though I gave him no provocation; he who brought shame upon himself has brought shame upon me.

THE CHANDALAS. Sthavaraka, are you telling the truth?

STHAVARAKA. The truth. And it was to prevent me from disclosing these facts to anyone that my master had me laden with chains and imprisoned in the tower of his palace.

(*Enter Samsthanaka.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*gaily*). I have just banqueted in my palace and eaten meat stewed with condiments and sauces, fresh fish, sugared rice, and buttered rice.

(*listening*) But I hear the voices of Chandalas, shrill as the sound of cracked cymbals, and also the loud rolling of the drums that announce condemnations to death; so I suppose that they are taking that beggar, Charudatta, to the place of execution. I should see that! To behold the death of an enemy greatly contents the heart—and besides, I have heard that if a man watches the death of his enemy, he will be immune to eye-infections in the next life. Moreover, I was like the worm that crawled into the knot of a lotus-root, and found a hole to crawl out; and it is I who caused the death of Charudatta, the pauper. I shall do well, therefore, to go up on the terrace of my palace and watch the

consummation of my prowess. (*He does so, and looks at the scene.*) Oh, ho ! How they throng to see the beggar Charudatta led to execution ! But just think what a crowd there would be if a person of my ultimate nobility and rank were being led to his death ! (*looking closely*) He is decorated like a young bull. They are taking him down the southern road. But why was not the proclamation made near the tower of my palace ? What has interrupted it ? (*He looks about.*) What ? Sthavaraka gone ! If only he hasn't escaped to betray my secret ! I must hasten to find him ! (*He descends and comes forward.*)

STHAVARAKA (*seeing him*). See ! There comes my master.

CHANDALAS. Make way ! Open a path ! Look to yourselves !

Be silent ! The man who advances is like a maddened bull, and his arrogance takes the place of sharp horns.

SAMSTHANAKA. Ho, there ! Make way ! Make way ! (*arriving*)

Come Sthavaraka, my lad, my son ; come home with me.

STHAVARAKA. Vile wretch ! Was it not enough to murder

Vasantasena ? Must you also contrive the death of the noble Charudatta, who is a tree of bounty to all his friends ?

SAMSTHANAKA. What ? I ? I who am like a golden bowl filled with jewels, I killed that woman ?

ALL. Yes, you killed her—not the noble Charudatta.

SAMSTHANAKA. Who dares say that ?

ALL (*pointing to Sthavaraka*). This worthy man.

SAMSTHANAKA (*terrified, to himself*). I am lost ! I am lost !

Oh, why didn't I chain up more securely this slave who witnessed my crime ? (*reflecting*) Yes, that is what I must do. (*aloud*) This is a lie, gentlemen. I caught this slave stealing gold ; I beat him, exterminated him, and chained him up. That is why he hates me. How can anyone believe that he is telling the truth ? (*aside to Sthavaraka, secretly offering him a bracelet*) Here, Sthavaraka, my good fellow, my son, take this and deny what you have just said.

STHAVARAKA (*taking the bracelet*). See, see, gentlemen ! He is trying to bribe me with gold !

SAMSTHANAKA (*snatching the bracelet*). Ah ! The very bracelet for the theft of which I had him enchained ! (*with anger*)

Yes, Chandalas, I had placed him in charge of my jewel-cases, and he stole golden ornaments from me. Then I beat

him and exterminated him. If you have any doubts, just look at his back !

CHANDALAS (*having looked*). Yes, quite true. When one beats a slave's flesh with whips, one enkindles wrath within him.

STHAVARAKA. Alas ! No one will believe me because I am a slave. (*sorrowfully*) Noble Charudatta, I have done all that I can. (*He throws himself down at Charudatta's feet.*)

CHARUDATTA. Arise, you who sympathize with the sufferings of an honourable man, you who feel for me a kinsman's solicitude, though I have done nothing to merit it. Your zealous efforts to save me are in vain, for Destiny does not change. But have you not done everything for me today ?

CHANDALAS. Sir, return your slave to his punishment, and take him away.

SAMSTHANAKA. Come on ! (*He makes him go*) And you, Chandalas, why are you so slow in proceeding with the execution ?

THE CHANDALAS. If you're in such a hurry, do the work of the headsman yourself.

ROHASENA. Chandalas, kill me and let my father go.

SAMSTHANAKA. Kill him and the child too !

CHARUDATTA. That madman may do anything Go away, my son, return to your mother.

ROHASENA. And what must I do when I have gone ?

CHARUDATTA. My son, this very day you and your mother shall retire to a hermitage in the forest, so that you too will not expiate the crime imputed to your father.

My friend, take him away.

MAITREYA. Ah, my friend ! Do you think that I can live without you ?

CHARUDATTA. You hold life in your own hands, my friend, and you would sin greatly if you were to cast it away.

MAITREYA (*to himself*). It would be sinful, but nevertheless I shall no longer be able to endure life when I no longer have my friend. I shall, therefore, take this child to his mother, and then I shall abandon life and follow my friend from this world. (*aloud*) My friend, I shall take the child home at once. (*He embraces Charudatta, and falls at his feet. Rohasena, weeping, joins Maitreya.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. What's this? Didn't I say that father and son were to be executed at the same time? (*Charudatta is frightened.*)

THE CHANDALAS. The order of the king is explicit and does not provide that we are to execute his son with him. Go now, child, go now. (*They send Rohasena away.*) Here is the place where the third proclamation must be made. Beat the drums! (*Exeunt Rohasena and Maitreya. The Chandalas repeat the proclamation.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*to himself*). Astonishing! The citizens don't believe it! (*aloud*) Come, Charudatta, my clever young man, the citizens don't believe it: tell them with your own lips that you murdered Vasantasena! (*Charudatta remains silent.*) Just look, Chandalas; this rascal, this clever young Charudatta is sullenly silent! Make him speak! Beat him with the pieces of split bamboo with which you sound your drums.

A CHANDALA (*preparing to do so*). Come, Charudatta, speak up!

CHARUDATTA (*sorrowfully*). Now that I am plunged in the depths of the ocean of misfortune, my mind knows neither terror nor despair; the fire that consumes me is the obloquy that is directed at me, for it is said that I murdered the girl who was so dear to me. (*Samsthanaka repeats his exhortation.*) Oh, fellow citizens!

I am, it is said, a depraved person who is heedless of the two worlds, and by me an excellent and beautiful woman, Pleasure incarnate, was—He will say the rest.

SAMSTHANAKA. Was murdered!

CHARUDATTA. As you say.

A CHANDALA. It was your turn to execute the condemned man.

THE OTHER CHANDALA. No, it's your turn.

FIRST CHANDALA. Well, let's count! (*He counts at length.*) Well, if it's my turn to execute the condemned, Charudatta will have a moment of grace.

OTHER CHANDALA. Why?

FIRST CHANDALA. My father, just as he was departing for heaven, said to me: "My son, my sturdy son, when it is your turn to execute a condemned man, do nothing hastily."

OTHER CHANDALA. Well, and why was that?

FIRST CHANDALA. A worthy man may come and pay money to liberate the condemned ; a son may be born to the king who will, therefore, spare all the prisoners ; an elephant may break his bonds and it might be possible for the condemned man to make his escape in the resulting confusion ; or finally, there may be a change of kings and consequently a general amnesty.

SAMSTHANAKA. What's this ? What's this ? A change of kings?

A CHANDALA. We were merely calculating whose turn it was to execute the condemned.

SAMSTHANAKA. Come on ! Hurry up and put Charudatta to death. (*Holding Sthavaraka, he draws away to one side.*)

A CHANDALA. Sir Charudatta, the responsibility rests on the king who has commanded, not on us, who are mere Chandalas. So think now of those things which you wish last to remember.

CHARUDATTA. If virtue ultimately prevails, then I, who am today destroyed by my unhappy destiny and by the false accusations of an evil prince, may hope that someday she, whether she dwell in the world of the gods or in this world, will, by her true nature, wipe out the stain on my honour.

Well, where am I to go now ?

A CHANDALA (*pointing ahead*). Over there. It is the Southern cemetery and the condemned persons who see it have not long to live. Look, look :

Half the corpse of that impaled man is torn and dragged by the ravenous jackals, but the other half still hangs in shreds on the stake, and seems to laugh mockingly.

CHARUDATTA. Alas ! Unfortunate that I am, I am going to die. (*He falls to the ground.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. I shall not go—not till I have watched Charudatta die. (*He advances and looks about.*) What ? He is sitting down ?

A CHANDALA. Are you afraid, Charudatta ?

CHARUDATTA (*leaping to his feet*). Fool !

It was not death that frightened me, but only the blot on my reputation ; and were that dishonour effaced, death would be dear to me as the birth of a son.

A CHANDALA. Noble Charudatta, even the sun and the moon

as they traverse the wide plains of heaven must encounter misfortune ; how much more, then, the races of men in this world where all must momentarily fear the coming of death ? He who lived, perished ; he who perished, lives again. Like change of garments is the successive animation and destruction of the body. Remember this in your heart and you will be strengthened. (*To the other Chandala.*) Here is the place where we must make the fourth proclamation. (*They repeat the proclamation.*)

CHARUDATTA. Alas, Vasantasena !

You whose teeth are as clear as the rays of the moon, you whose lips are like crimson coral ; why must I, after sipping the nectar of your mouth, be constrained to drink the bitter poison of disgrace ?

(*Enter hastily Vasantasena and the Friar.*)

FRIAR. How strange ! My renunciation of the world was the very thing that made it possible for me to protect Vasantasena and aid her to recover from her fatigue and agitation. Where shall I take you, Servant of the Lord ?

VASANTASENA. To the home of the noble Charudatta. Delight me with the sight of him ; he is to me what the moon is to the water-lilies that bloom in the moonlight.

FRIAR (*to himself*). Which of these two roads should we take ? (*reflecting*) Let's follow the royal highway. Come, Servant of the Lord ; this way—along the main thoroughfare. (*listening*) What can be the cause of this tumult that one hears down the royal highway ?

VASANTASENA (*looking ahead*). Ah ! What a large crowd ahead of us ! What, sir, can it be ? The city of Ujjayini tips to one side like a ship that is unequally laden.

A CHANDALA. Here is the place where the last proclamation must be made. Beat the drum and announce the terms of the sentence. (*The proclamation is made.*) Be patient, Charudatta, and don't be afraid : the agony will not be of long duration.

CHARUDATTA. O blessed Gods !

FRIAR (*having heard ; in a trembling voice*). Servant of the

Lord, they say that you were murdered by Charudatta, and they are leading him to execution.

VASANTASENA (*terrified*). Oh, horrible ! Oh, horrible ! What catastrophe ! Wretch that I am, the noble Charudatta is about to die because of me ! Quickly, quickly ! Show me the road !

FRIAR. Run ! Run, Servant of Buddha ! Restore Charudatta to life while he stills lives ! Make way, sirs, make way !

VASANTASENA. Make way ! Make way !

A CHANDALA. Sir Charudatta, the king must be blamed for this ; it is his command. Think of the things which you wish last to remember.

CHARUDATTA. Why discourse at length ?

If virtue ultimately prevails, then I, who am today destroyed by my unhappy destiny and by the false accusations of an evil prince, may hope that someday she, whether she dwell in the world of the gods or in this world, will, by her true nature, wipe out the stain on my honour.

A CHANDALA (*drawing his sword*). Sir Charudatta, lie flat, don't move, and with a single blow we shall end your life and send you to Indra's paradise. (*Charudatta follows these directions. As Chandala prepares to strike, the sword falls from his hands.*) Oh, what is this ?

I drew my sword and swung it vigorously ; I gripped it with both hands—yet that terrible weapon fell to the earth like a thunderbolt !

This, it seems to me, is a sign that the noble Charudatta should not die. O Great Goddess dwelling on the Mountains of Sahya, have mercy ! Have mercy ! If Charudatta is saved, all the Chandalas will have been benefited by you.

OTHER CHANDALA. We must do as we are commanded.

FIRST CHANDALA. Very well. Let's proceed. (*They prepare to impale Charudatta.*)

CHARUDATTA. If virtue ultimately prevails, then I, who am today destroyed by my unhappy destiny and by the false accusations of an evil prince, may hope that someday she, whether she dwell in the world of the gods or in this world, will, by her true nature, wipe out the stain on my honour.

FRIAR AND VASANTASENA (*seeing these preparations*). Stop, sirs, stop, stop! Here I am, the miserable cause of this execution!

A CHANDALA (*looking*). Who is this woman who runs toward us with frantic speed, whose long hair falls about her shoulders, and who, waving her hands, cries to us to stop?

VASANTASENA. Oh, noble Charudatta, what is happening? (*She falls on his breast.*)

FRIAR. O noble Charudatta, what is happening? (*He falls at his feet.*)

A CHANDALA (*astonished*). Heavens! It's Vasantasena! How fortunate that we did not execute this noble man.

FRIAR (*rising*). Thank heaven, Charudatta lives.

A CHANDALA. May he live a hundred years!

VASANTASENA (*joyfully*). Ah! I, too, return to life!

A CHANDALA. We must report this happening to the king who is in the Place of Sacrifice. (*They move away.*)

SAMSTHANAKA (*seeing Vasantasena; frightened*). Impossible! How did that slave's whelp come to life again? I am swooning! I must escape! (*He flees.*)

A CHANDALA (*turning*). Did not the king's order instruct us to execute the person who struck her down? We must catch him—the brother-in-law of the king! (*Excunt Chandalas.*)

CHARUDATTA (*surprised*). Who is this woman who, at the very moment that the sword was poised above me and I had already entered the cavernous jaws of Death, came like a fecund rain that falls on parched and withering fields of grain?

(*looking to one side*) Ah! Is this another Vasantasena? Or has she come down from the heavens? Does my mind, deceived by some hallucination, only imagine that it sees Vasantasena? Or can it be that she is not dead?

Is it possible?

Did she descend from Indra's paradise to save my life?

Or is this some being that has assumed a beauty like hers?

VASANTASENA (*rising tearfully, then falling at his feet*). Yes, noble Charudatta, it is I—unworthy creature, the cause of the dreadful plight in which you find yourself.



VOICES (*offstage.*) Amazing ! Wonderful ! Vasantasena is alive!  
 (Everyone repeats the exclamation.)

CHARUDATTA (*listens, rises quickly and touches Vasantasena ecstatically, closing his eyes*). O beloved ! Is it you, Vasantasena ?

VASANTASENA. Yes, it is I, a miserable creature.

CHARUDATTA (*looking at her with delight*). Can it be ? It is Vasantasena ! (*rapturously*) Whence did you come, you whose breasts are bathed with the dew of tears, to restore me to life as with a marvellous incantation at the very moment that I lay in the power of Death ?

Beloved Vasantasena,

My body, which was about to be destroyed because of you, has been restored to life by you. Oh, miracle of the meeting of lovers ! It can awaken the dead to life !

And indeed, my beloved, behold :

Is not this crimson robe like the robe worn by a bridegroom, and this garland like that which a bridegroom wears at the coming of the bride ? And was not the rumbling of the executioners' drums like the rolling of the drums that are sounded at a marriage feast ?

VASANTASENA. Tell me, lord : what did you, who are so generous, do ?

CHARUDATTA. Beloved, I had murdered you, according to the tale told by

An enemy of princely rank who has bitterly hated me for a long time and who, plunging himself toward Hell, almost succeeded in bringing about my downfall.

VASANTASENA (*clapping her hands to her ears*). Horrible ! It was he, the king's brother-in-law, who attempted to murder me.

CHARUDATTA (*indicating the Friar*) Who is this man ?

VASANTASENA. This worthy man restored to me the life which the depraved person had taken away.

CHARUDATTA. Who are you, unknown friend ?

FRIAR. Do you not remember me, sir ? I am the itinerant serving-man who, indeed, served you as masseur. Having fallen into the power of the gamblers, I was ransomed by this Servant of the Lord because I had been in your service. Disgusted with gambling, I became a Buddhist mendicant.

As for this lady, she, having entered the wrong *gharri*, came to the old Pushpakarandaka gardens ; there, that vile creature, finding that she would have nothing to do with him, strangled her with his hands. And thus I found her.

(*Tumult offstage.*)

A VOICE. Victory to great Siva who destroyed the sacrifice of Daksha ! Victory to the Six-Headed Conqueror who smote Mount Krauncha ! And Victory to Aryaka who has destroyed his enemies and won all the vast empire of Ujjayini on whose ramparts gleam like banners the radiant peaks of Kailasa !

SARVILAKA (*entering hurriedly*). I slew the king, Palaka, and immediately consecrated Aryaka king in his stead. Now I bear upon my head, like a wreath of flowers, the command of the king, and I am to deliver Charudatta from the misfortunes which beset him

Aryaka, having destroyed an enemy who was abandoned by his army and ministers, and having, by a display of his power, gained the allegiance of all the citizens, has attained supreme and undisputed empire. He has conquered the world as Indra conquered Heaven.

Let's see, now. (*looking ahead*) Charudatta is probably over there where I see that crowd. May the first victory of Aryaka result in the rescue of the noble Charudatta ! (*He hastens forward.*) Out of the way, loiterers ! (*seeing Charudatta ; joyfully*) Ah ! Charudatta is still alive, and he is accompanied by Vasantasena ! The wishes of the king shall be fulfilled.

Behold, he has at last attained the other shore of the great ocean of misfortune ! From afar I see him brought to safety by his beloved as by a noble ship that is rigged with virtue and laden with all good things. It is as though I saw the moon with its serene radiance delivered from an eclipse.

But how can I approach him, I who have greatly sinned against him ? But yet, honesty is never unwelcome. (*He approaches and claps his hands.*) Noble Charudatta.

CHARUDATTA. Who are you, sir ?

SARVILAKA. The man who made a breach in the wall of your house and stole the deposit that had been entrusted to

you. I committed a mortal sin and beg you to forgive me.  
 CHARUDATTA. Not at all, my friend ! By so doing, you really did me a great service. (*He embraces him*).

SARVILAKA. Then listen :

The noble Aryaka, asserting by decisive action the honour of his name and lineage, has immolated the tyrant Palaka like a sacrificial victim at the altar in the Place of Sacrifice.

CHARUDATTA. What ?

SARVILAKA. He who once entered your *gharri* and placed himself under your protection today came upon Palaka, who was performing a sacrifice, and slew him like an animal that is offered to the gods.

CHARUDATTA. Was it not you, Sarvilaka, who delivered Aryaka from prison when Palaka, without cause, had him arrested in an outlying village and thrown into a dungeon ?

SARVILAKA. That is right.

CHARUDATTA. I rejoice to hear it

SARVILAKA. As soon as your friend Aryaka was established on the throne of Ujjayini, he named you viceroy of the city of Kusavati, on the river Vena. You will receive with pleasure this first manifestation of his friendship. (*turning away*)  
 Ho, there ! Bring hither that princely renegade !

VOICES (*offstage*). The orders of Sarvilaka are obeyed !

SARVILAKA. Sir, King Aryaka sends you this message : "Enjoy the kingdom which I owe to your virtues."

CHARUDATTA. He owes his kingdom to his own merits.

VOICE (*offstage*). Ho, here comes the vile brother-in-law of the king that was. Come along, receive the reward of your guilt. (*Samsthanaka, his hands tied behind his back, is dragged in by several men.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Incredible !

I fled far away, like a donkey that has broken its halter, but here I am, dragged back in chains, like a mad dog. (*looking about*) I, a kinsman of the king, am surrounded on all sides by the men who captured me. Where can I find a refuge from misfortune ? (*He meditates.*) Yes, I shall beg protection from the man who never refuses it to those who ask for it. (*advancing*) Oh, noble Charudatta, protect me ! Protect me ! (*He falls at Charudatta's feet.*)

VOICES (*offstage*). Worthy Charudatta, give him to us! *We want to kill him!*

SAMSTHANAKA (*to Charudatta*). Save me, you who are the refuge of those who have no refuge!

CHARUDATTA (*with pity*). Yes! He who places himself under my protection shall be in safety.

SARVILAKA (*angry*). Ho! take him away from Charudatta! (*to Charudatta*) Now what should we do with this criminal?

Should we tie him up and have him dragged to death, or should we leave him to be devoured by the dogs, or should we impale him, or should we dismember him with a saw?

CHARUDATTA. Will you do what I request?

SARVILAKA. Certainly.

SAMSTHANAKA. O Lord Charudatta, I have placed myself under your protection! Save me! Save me! Decide according to your noble character! I'll never do anything like that again!

VOICES (*offstage*). Kill him! Kill him! Why let that criminal live? (*Vasantasena takes the garland of oleander blossoms from Charudatta and places it on Samsthanaka.*)

SAMSTHANAKA. Forgive me, little slave, forgive me! I'll never try to kill you again! Save me!

SARVILAKA. Come, take him away! Worthy Charudatta, tell us: what shall we do with this scoundrel?

CHARUDATTA. Will you do as I say?

SARVILAKA. Of course.

CHARUDATTA. Certainly?

SARVILAKA. Certainly!

CHARUDATTA. In that case, lose no time in—

SARVILAKA. Executing him?

CHARUDATTA. No, no! —in releasing him.

SARVILAKA. What? But why?

CHARUDATTA. When an enemy, however malevolent he may have been, throws himself at your feet and implores your protection, you should not put him to the sword,—

SARVILAKA. Oh, very well,—we'll have him eaten by the dogs.

CHARUDATTA. No, no!

—for the punishment that he deserves is kindness.

SARVILAKA. Amazing ! What shall we do with him, admirable man ?

CHARUDATTA. Release him.

SARVILAKA. Let it be done !

SAMSTHANAKA. Astonishing ! I am still alive ! (*Exeunt Sams-  
thanaka and his captors.*)\*

SARVILAKA. Noble Vasantasena, the king, rejoicing, graciously confers upon you the title of wife.

VASANTASENA. Sir, I attain my dearest wish.

SARVILAKA (*veils Vasantasena ; then turns to Charudatta*).

Sir, what shall we do with this friar ?

CHARUDATTA. Friar, what is your ambition ?

FRIAR. Having beheld this demonstration of the instability of human fortune, I am more than ever resolved to remain a wandering ascetic.

CHARUDATTA. His resolve is unalterable, my friend. We must appoint him Grand Master over all Buddhist cloisters.

SARVILAKA. As you say, sir.

FRIAR. There could be nothing more pleasing to me.

VASANTASENA. Now I have fully recovered life.

SARVILAKA. And what shall we do with Sthavaraka ?

CHARUDATTA. We must emancipate that worthy man. As for these Chandalas, we shall make them chief of all the Chandalas. As for Chandanaka, he shall be Commander of all the civil guards of the empire and he shall enjoy all the property and perquisites that formerly belonged to Sams-  
thanaka.

SARVILAKA. It shall be done as you say, sir. But as for this last named person, give him to me—let me have him executed.

CHARUDATTA. Do not harm him, for he has placed himself under my protection.

When an enemy, however malevolent he may have been, throws himself at your feet and implores your protection,

\*At this point a scene containing approximately a hundred lines, considerably elaborating the action, was added by the playwright Nilakantha, several centuries after the original dramatist. The interpolation is now usually, and, I think, wisely, omitted. Professor Oliver's translation of it is not included here.

you should not put him to the sword, for the punishment that he deserves is kindness.

SARVILAKA. Tell me, sir, what else can I do to please you.

CHARUDATTA. What more could I desire ?

My innocence is proven and my honour is unblemished ; I have granted to my fallen adversary his life ; my dear friend Aryaka, having uprooted and exterminated all his enemies, rules as emperor ; I have won again my dearest beloved, and at the same time, a true friend. What other benefits, what greater things, could I desire ?

For Destiny in its inevitable course despoils one man to lavish exuberant benefits upon another ; it exalts one man, dashes down another to whom it will later restore its favours. Destiny, as it plays with us, teaches us that this world is a union of opposites, an alternate recurrence of fortune and misfortune, and that, by the fundamental nature of the world, we and our adversaries are indissolubly bound together, like buckets that, fastened to an endless chain, rise and fall in a well.

I shall, however, make this wish :

May the cows never cease to give abundance of milk ; may the earth bring forth rich harvests ; may Indra's rain seasonably descend upon the fields ; may the breath of the pure winds refresh the hearts of men ; may all living things enjoy unchanging happiness ; may the Brahmanas be worthy of the veneration that is accorded them ; may the kings, vanquishing their enemies and always mindful of their duties, rule gloriously over the world. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

*Thus Ends the Tenth Act, "The Denouement, or the Drawing Together into a Knot".*



KALIDASA

*Shakuntala*  
*or The Recovered Ring*

TRANSLATED BY

A. HJALMAR EDGREN



## INTRODUCTION

THERE is small difficulty in perceiving the superior station in Sanskrit drama conceded to Kalidasa, author of *Shakuntala*, who presumably wrote shortly after 400 A. D. His work is certainly more polished and eloquent than Bhasa's, more artful and less mannered than Bhavabhuti's. The reader must be struck at once by the ripeness of his thought and expression. Poise and assurance, a complete sense of accomplishment, are written across all his pages. Alone among the chief Sanskrit dramatists he was author of celebrated specimens of pure poetry as well as of plays, in this regard resembling several of the most eminent of English dramatists. Thus there survive from his hand two courtly and religious epics, *The Dynasty of Raghu*, and *The Birth of the War-God*, a moving elegiac poem *The Cloud Messenger*, and a short hymn-sequence, *The Seasons*, all deeply grounded in traditions of Indian thought and expression. His plays show above all his command of myth and symbol on the one hand, of style and metaphor on the other. They exhibit an aesthetic ideal conspicuous in Hindu poetry which may be expressed as a conjunction of power and grace. Thus his dramas stand midway between the vigor of the earlier masters and the smoothness of the later. In the terminology of English eighteenth-century criticism, they are distinguished by elegance. If Sudraka's humanity suggests Shakespeare, Kalidasa's poise suggests Sophocles.

He is known to be author of three plays, to the most celebrated of which these paragraphs serve as foreword. Like much of his pure poetry, all three dramas spring from a philosophy harmonizing nature and man. Seasonal and fertility myths are perspicuous, even behind the quite lifelike and convincing persons seen upon the stage. Thus the plays are true myths, not allegories. Their meaning is not coldly intellectual but warmly imaginative, not the result of calculation but of intuition, not the fruit of mere reasoning, but of controlled vision.

Just as the seasons are crucial in nature, sex is found central in human nature. Moreover, sex is studied from both its biological basis and its idealistic projection as love. Without

the pedantic scale of values sometimes mechanically measured out in European literature, especially in the Middle Ages, there is an obvious transition between physical attraction and a love of ideals, among these ideals being friendship, the family life with offspring, and the sense of beauty, both for nature and for art. Kalidasa is a spokesman for a high measure of refinement, whether in manners or in the arts. His poetry descriptive of nature has seldom been excelled among playwrights yet it seems essential in the action of his plays. The heroine of one is temporarily metamorphosized into a vine ; the chief deed of another heroine is to cause a tree to blossom by touching it with her foot ; the heroine of a third, whose name it bears, cherishes all living things with more than a Franciscan devotion ; she calls the trees, which she piously waters, her sisters, and looks on her favorite deer as one of her most intimate friends. In the two more serious plays the chief lovers are separated from each other during a period of barrenness represented by the dry or wintry season. Summer with its warmth and rain accompanies their later reunion. The stories of these plays are preposterous to the literal mind but most gratifying to the poetic imagination. These attitudes of Kalidasa comprise a leading feature of his strongly religious nature, rooted in the mythologies of his native land. No less than Buddha himself, he seems stationed beneath a gigantic tree. His poetry, too, encompasses the earth ; there are innumerable allusions to water and even a few allusions to the ocean, but, most memorable of all, descriptions of the great Indian mountains, which Kalidasa must have loved with an almost personal affection. The prayer of invocation at the beginning of *Shakuntala* invokes Shiva as God of the elemental forces construed, according to the priestly lore of the author's country, water, fire, sun and moon, ether, earth, air, and as center of all, the priestly mind itself. Kalidasa possessed a great and happy spirit.

It can hardly be too much emphasized that his plays can never be adequately understood in literal or prosaic terms. The curse of forgetfulness which results from *Shakuntala*'s momentary absorption in self and which so sorely afflicts king Dushyanta is pure folklore, repugnant to rational thinking and to an objective view of experience. The play is a dream but a dream of inestimable value, designed to purify the

mind by its profound interpretation of the emotional life.

Like many Sanskrit plays of the mythological type, the earlier scenes are rich in elegant sensuality, the later, in the most audacious imagination. The reunion of the king with his wife and his first meeting with their child constitute a sanctification of marriage through the medium of a religiously inspired theatre. The conception escapes banality by the sublimity of the poetry, especially in the passages just before the final scene, as in the description of the king's journey in his aerial car, from which the earth is viewed in all its splendor and spaciousness. A play beginning as a gentle and sensuous pastoral, with a sylvan imagery, ends in exalted vision. To unenlightened eyes its many episodes may have seemed disconnected and desultory but such proves by no means the case. To the poet's interpretation of life the episode of the fisherman, with its homely humor, contributes, on a considerably higher plane, much the same wisdom as the episode of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The Jester's love of food is as much a part of the universal scheme as the saint's love of the gods. Nothing may safely be regarded as slight where fate employs homely means to noble ends. So the play's thought transcends the prosaic confinements of caste-consciousness. All men and all nature, the children and the aged, lovers and ascetics, participate in one universal drama of which Kalidasa's work affords a symbol. Possibly of all dramas, it most successfully embodies the mystical conception of the union of the physical and the celestial rose. Always gracious, it gratifies either child or sage.

The translation that has been preferred for this volume is by A. Hjalmar Edgren, issued in 1894. This Swedish-born scholar ably translated several Sanskrit plays into his native tongue and wrote philological works on a number of languages. Since he was, moreover, a man of much taste and imagination, his version of *Shakuntala* possesses a vivacity that will always make it appear modern ; but almost inevitably it bears a few traces of English poetic idiom characteristic of the last century. Distinctly minor changes chiefly in the word order have, accordingly, been thought permissible for this book, but changes which in no instance alter the sense of Professor Edgren's translation or affect his admirable stylistic intentions.

*Shakuntala*  
*or*  
*The Recovered Ring*

*Characters*

DUSHYANTA, King of India  
MATILAVYA, Jester (friend of the King)  
VATAYANA, Chamberlain  
RAIVATIKA, Warder  
SOMARATA, The King's domestic Priest  
MITRAVASU, Chief of the Police  
JANUKA and SUCHAKA, Constables  
KARABHAKA, Messenger of the Queen-mother  
KANVA, Chief of the Hermitage, Foster-father of Shakuntala  
SHARNGARAVA and SHARADVATA, Brahmans of the Hermitage  
MATALI, Charioteer of Indra  
KASHYAPA, Saint, Indra's father  
SARVADAMANA or Bharata, Son of Dushyanta  
SHANKUNTALA, Foster-child of Kanva  
PRIYAMVADA and ANASUYA, Companions of Shakuntala  
GAUTAMI, Matron of the Hermitage  
VASUMATI, Queen of Dushyanta  
TARALIKA, Attendant of the King  
CHATURIKA, Attendant of the Queen  
VETRAVATI, Female Warder  
PARABHARITIKA and MADHUKARIKA, Maids in charge of the  
    Royal Garden  
SANUMATI, Nymph  
ADITI, Wife of Kashyapa  
    Charioteer, Fisherman, Officers, and Hermits

## BENEDICTION

May he whose presence is made manifest  
 To mortals in these eight embodiments :  
 The Water, earliest of created things ;  
 The Fire, which, ascending, bears on high  
 The offering of the holy sacrifice ;  
 The Priest, performer of that sacrifice ;  
 The Sun and Moon, distributors of time ;  
 The all-pervading Ether, realm of sound ;  
 The Earth, "producer of all beings" named ;  
 And last the Air, respiring creatures' life ;—  
 May he, the Lord, be gracious unto you !

## PROLOGUE

STAGE-MANAGER. (*looking toward the scenes*). Lady, if you have arranged your costume, please come forward !

ACTRESS (*entering*). Here I am, sir Command me. What shall be done ?

STAGE-MANAGER. This is for the most part a refined audience, my lady. We must now represent the new play by Kalidasa called *The Recognition of Shakuntala*. May each actor endeavor to do his best !

ACTRESS. Thanks to your judicious arrangement, sir, nothing will go amiss.

STAGE-MANAGER. I will, good lady, tell you a truth :

Not till it please enlightened taste

I find perfection in our art.

Even those of a commanding skill

Are unpretending in their heart.

ACTRESS (*modestly*). That is true. And now command what shall be done.

STAGE-MANAGER. What else than to please this audience by a song.

ACTRESS. Well, then, about which season shall I sing ?

STAGE-MANAGER. Sing by all means about this enjoyable summer season just set in. For these are days

With grateful baths in rippling waves,  
 And sylvan breezes carrying on  
 The trumpet-flower's fragrant balm,  
 And gentle slumbers in the shade,  
 And evenings full of sweetest calm.

ACTRESS. I will. (*Sings*).

Fair loving maidens wreath their heads  
 With blossoms of acacia trees,  
 Whose slender, graceful pollen threads  
 Are gently kissed by humming bees.

STAGE-MANAGER. Charming! sung, good lady! Look, the entire audience seems like a picture, their souls entranced by your melody. Now then, what play shall we select to preserve their favour?

ACTRESS. Why, surely, we must play the new drama already announced by your honour, *The Recognition of Shakuntala*.

STAGE-MANAGER. I am rightly reminded, good lady. For the moment, indeed, I had forgotten it.

Transported was my soul with force  
 By the enchanting melody of your song,  
 As king Dushyanta here is lured  
 By that swift-speeding deer along (*Exeunt*).

## ACT FIRST

*Scene —A forest.*

*King Dushyanta, with bow and arrow in his hand pursuing an antelope, appears with his Driver in a chariot.*

CHARIOTEER (*looking at the King and the deer*).

When I behold, great king, yourself  
 With well-strung bow, and that black deer,  
 I think I see the bow-armed god,  
 As he pursued the deer, revealed.

KING. We have been drawn far away, my charioteer, by that antelope. See him now.

With graceful curving of his neck,

He gazes on the chasing car,  
 And, to escape the falling dart,  
 Contracts his frame with shrinking dread.  
 His path is strewn with half-chewed grass  
 That drips from his wide-gaping mouth.  
 Look, by his bounding, in the air  
 Far more than on the earth he flies ! (*Amazed*).

What now ! Though I follow closely I hardly can see the antelope.

CHARIOTEER. Sire, the ground is very uneven ; I have drawn the reins and slackened the speed of the chariot. So the antelope has left us behind. But now that you are on level ground he will easily be overtaken.

KING. Slacken the reins, then !

CHARIOTEER. As your Grace commands. (*Drives the chariot at full speed*).

My prince,  
 Behold again, with slackened rein,  
 Incited by the speeding deer,  
 Untouched even by the floating dust  
 Which they themselves have raised,  
 The chariot horses dash along,  
 Their necks with eager vying stretched,  
 Their cresting plumelets floating stiff,  
 Their ears erect and motionless.

KING (*joyously*). Indeed, these spirited horses excel even Indra's steeds and the sun's.

What to my view appeared as small  
 Suddenly grows to magnitude ;  
 What was divided into two  
 Seems blending fast into one whole ;  
 What was uneven in its form  
 Turns to my gaze a perfect line ;  
 So swift the car nothing appears  
 An instant even, far nor near.

Charioteer, now see how the deer will be laid low !

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*). King ! King ! this antelope belongs to the hermitage. Do not kill him ! Do not kill him !

CHARIOTEER (*listening and looking*). Noble prince, some hermits

have indeed thrown themselves between that black antelope and your arrow.

KING (*hastily*). Check the horses, then !

CHARIOTEER. It's done. (*Stopping the chariot*).

*Enter a Hermit followed by two others.*

HERMIT (*raising his hand*). O king, pray, do not kill this antelope, which belongs to the hermitage !

No, no, let not your arrow strike  
The tender body of this deer,  
As a spark falls on softest down !  
How is that right, his gentle life  
And your sharp, adamant dart ?  
Then, pray, withhold your well-aimed shaft.  
Your weapon should defend the weak  
And not assail the innocent.

KING. It is withdrawn ! (*Replacing the arrow into its quiver*.)

HERMIT. This action is worthy of a prince, the light of Puru's race.

Yes, it befits you well, indeed,  
You scion of a noble race !  
Your guerdon be a virtuous son,  
The mighty ruler of a world !

THE TWO OTHER HERMITS (*raising their hands*). Yes, may you be rewarded with a world-commanding son !

KING (*bowing*). Your benediction is reverently received.

HERMIT. Noble prince, we are here to gather fuel. There, on the banks of the Malini, you can see the hermitage of Kanva, the great saint. If you are not prevented by other duties, enter and accept our hospitable attention. And then,

When you have seen the pleasing rites  
That unmolested hermits perform there,  
You must know how well your arm,  
That arm with bowstring marks, protects.

KING. Is the head of your community now at home ?

HERMIT. For the present, indeed, he is on a pilgrimage to Soma-tirtha to propitiate Destiny, turned inauspicious to his daughter Shakuntala. But in the meantime he has enjoined on her the functions of hospitality.

KING. Good ! I will see her. When she has learned my veneration for the great saint, she will report my homage.



HERMIT. Then we will complete our task. (*Exit with companions*).

KING. Charioteer, urge the horses on. We will purify ourselves by the view of this sacred hermitage.

CHARIOTEER. As Your Majesty commands. (*Drives the chariot rapidly*.)

KING (*looking around*).

It is evident, even without being told, that these are the precincts of a sacred grove.

CHARIOTEER. How so ?

King. Why, just observe

The rice is strewn below the trees  
From hollow trunks that parrots fill ;  
There lie the oily stones that serve  
To bruise the fruit of Ingudi ;  
The antelopes, taught here to trust,  
Unstartled hear the human voice ;  
And fountain paths are marked by lines  
Of falling drops from clothes of bark.

And see :

The rootlets of the trees are laved  
By waters trembling in the breeze ;  
Their budding splendor is obscured  
By smoke from sacrificial oil ;  
And slowly the confiding fawns  
Roam near by on the well-mown lawns.

CHARIOTEER. All is as you say.

KING (*after a short advance*) Let us not disturb the dwellers of this hermit grove. Stop the chariot so that I may alight.

CHARIOTEER. The reins are drawn in. Your Majesty may descend.

KING (*alighting*). On entering a penance grove it is right, my charioteer, to lay aside all ornament. So take this. (*Reaching him his bow and ornaments*). Until I return from visiting the dwellers of this hermitage, see that the horses are refreshed

CHARIOTEER. It shall be done. (*Exit*.)

KING (*walking and looking around*). Here is the gate of the hermitage. Well, then, I will enter. (*Entering. Evincing a tremour of the right arm.*)

This hermit home is placid, calm,  
 Yet my arm feels a sudden throb.  
 What can it mean ? Ah, everywhere,  
 The Gates of Things To Be are found.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Here, this way, my friends !

KING (*listening*). I hear a conversation to the right of that grove. I must go there. (*Walking on and looking about.*) Ah, there some hermit maidens are approaching to sprinkle the young shrubs from watering pots suited to their strength. (*Gazing at them.*) Their appearance is indeed charming !  
 If hermit maidens' forms like these  
 In queenly halls are rarely seen,  
 It is because the forest vines  
 Excel the garden vines in charm.

I will conceal myself in that shade and watch them.

(*Enter Shakuntala with two friends, employed in the manner described.*)

SHAKUNTALA. Here, this way, my friends !

ANASUYA. Dear Shakuntala, I think father Kanva must love these hermitage shrubs even more than yourself. How else could he enjoin on you, yourself as delicate as the fresh-blown jasmine flower, to fill their trenches with water ?

SHAKUNTALA. Dear Anasuya, it is, indeed, not only by my father's command I do this task. I feel a sisterly love for these plants.

(*Watering the shrubs.*)

KING. How ? Is she the daughter of Kanva ? That venerable descendant of Kashyapa does not appear very wise in imposing on her the rigorous duties of a hermitage.

The saint who would to penance train  
 This lovely, charming, guileless form  
 Indeed attempts to cut the stem  
 Of an acacia with the edge  
 Of only a blue lotus leaf.

Well, concealed among these trees, I can see her without rousing her suspicion.

SHAKUNTALA. My dear Anasuya, I feel constrained by the bark dress, which Priyamvada has drawn too tight. Please loosen it.

ANASUYA. As you wish. (*Loosens it.*)

PRIYAMVADA (*smiling*). Well now, blame your own youth,  
the expander of your bosom ! Why do you blame me ?

KING. She is right.

For like a blooming bud inclosed  
Within a sheath of yellow leaves,  
Her youthful form may not expand  
Its native loveliness, withheld  
By that bark dress, which, tied upon  
Her shoulder with a graceful knot,  
Conceals the orbs of her twin breasts.

No ! rather, that bark dress, though ill adapted to her form,  
yet serves her as a graceful embellishment.

Even with the water weeds entwined,  
The water-lily shows her charm.  
The dusky spot upon the moon  
Elevates her splendor more.  
The dress of bark imparts a charm  
Far greater on the slender maid.  
For what may not, in truth, be called  
An ornament to lovely forms ?

SHAKUNTALA (*looking before her*). That keshara tree seems,  
with its shoots waving in the wind like fingers, to be beckon-  
ing me to hasten towards it. I will attend to it. (*Walks  
toward the tree.*)

PRIYAMVADA. Ah, Shakuntala, stand still one moment !  
SHAKUNTALA. Why ?

PRIYAMVADA. Because when you stand so by the keshara  
tree, it looks as if adorned with a creeper.

SHAKUNTALA. Ah, I see, your very name, Priyamvada, means  
flatterer

KING. Yes, Priyamvada tells Shakuntala a pleasing thing,  
but it is the truth. In fact

Her lip is purple like the bud,  
Her arms appear like tender shoots,  
And charming youth is like a bloom  
Attached upon her graceful form !

ANASUYA. Dear Shakuntala, here is the fresh-blown jasmine  
flower which you have named the "Light of the Grove,"  
now by her own choice the bride of the mango tree. Have  
you forgotten her ?

SHAKUNTALA. I might as well forget myself. (*Approaching the flower and looking at it.*) Dear friend, the union of this flower and this tree is accomplished in a delightful season. Fresh-blooming youth adorns the "Light of the Grove," and by sprouting shoots the mango betrays his rapture. (*Remains gazing at the flower.*)

PRIYAMVADA (*smiling*). Anasuya, do you know why Shakuntala looks so intently on the "Light of the Grove?"

ANASUYA. Really, I cannot surmise. Tell us!

PRIYAMVADA. This is what she thinks: "As the jasmine is united to a suitable tree, so may I also obtain a husband worthy of me!"

SHAKUNTALA. Now . . . that is your own soul's desire. (*Watering the flowers.*)

KING. Would that she were born by a mother belonging to a caste different from that of the head of this community. But away with all misgiving:

She can be a warrior's bride  
Since my truest soul desires her.  
The promptings of a noble heart  
Are a guide in doubtful matters.

SHAKUNTALA (*excitedly*). Ah, my sprinkling has scared a bee from that young jasmine! It is attacking me! (*Strikes at the bee.*)

KING (*looking ardently at her*). Lovely! Her very repulse is charming

Where the bee makes his attack  
She turns her quivering glance that way,  
And arching up her brows with fear,  
She learns what love has yet to teach,  
The charming play of amorous eyes.

(*In a tone of envy, to the bee.*)

Persistently you hover by  
Her tremulous, her changing eye,  
And whisper secrets in her ear  
With gentle murmur, drawing near,  
And while she waves you off, yet sip  
All the delight of her fair lip!  
My search for truth is idle game  
While you attain your simple aim.

SHAKUNTALA. That wicked bee will not cease. I must go away.  
*(Moving away a few steps, and glancing back.)* What, it follows even here ! Help me, dear friends, help me from that vile, dreadful bee that pursues me !

THE TWO FRIENDS *(smiling)*. How can we protect you ?  
 Appeal to Dushyanta. You know, hermitages are under royal protection.

KING. An opportune moment to show myself. *(Aloud.)*  
 Do not fear. . . *(Checks himself. Aside.)* But no ! They will recognize me as the king . . . Well, so be it. I will speak to them nevertheless.

SHAKUNTALA *(moving a few steps off)*. Why, it follows me even here !

KING *(suddenly stepping forth)*.

While Puru's scion rules the earth  
 And checks the evil-doer's course,  
 Who dares to practice rudeness then  
 On inoffensive hermit maids ?

*(All looking confused at the king.)*

ANASUYA. Honored sir, no offense was done. *(Pointing to Shakuntala.)* Our dear friend here was frightened by a pursuing bee, that's all.

KING *(turning toward Shakuntala)*. My salutation, lady. Is your penance propitious ? *(Shakuntala silent and embarrassed.)*

ANASUYA. Now it is, since it yields us the honour of having a guest. Dear Shakuntala, go to our hut and bring us fruit and other offerings of hospitality. This water will serve to wash the stranger's feet.

KING. You have already shown me hospitality by your kind words.

PRIYAMVADA. Be seated, then, kind sir, and repose yourself on that seat in the cool shade below the saptaparna tree.

KING. But you must be fatigued yourselves by your work.

ANASUYA. Dear Shakuntala, courtesy toward a guest is a duty.  
 Let us sit down here. *(All sit down.)*

SHAKUNTALA *(aside)*. Can it really be that the sight of this man affects me with an emotion unsuited to this holy grove ?

KING *(looking at the three maidens)*. Ah, a friendship is charming between beings so nearly kindred by age and beauty !

PRIYAMVADA (*aside to Anasuya*). Anasuya, but who can he be ? He appears a man of prominence, polite and dignified in manner and agreeable in conversation.

ANASUYA. I also, my friend, am eager to know. So I will ask him. (*Aloud.*) Noble lord, the confidence inspired by your kind words makes me bold to ask : Of what royal family are you the ornament ? Or what people laments your absence ? Or why does one so unused to hardship submit to the fatigue of visiting a penance grove ?

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Peace, my heart ! Anasuya is giving expression to your own anxious thought.

KING (*aside*). I must now reveal or disguise my real character—but how ? . . . I have it. This is what I will answer her. (*Aloud.*) Lady, enjoined by His Majesty, the descendant of Puru, to administer justice, I have come to this sacred grove to ascertain whether your rites here are free from obstruction.

ANASUYA. Then you are the protector of the pious. (*Shakuntala blushes with emotion.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS (*aside to Shakuntala, observing her emotion and that of the king*). Well, Shakuntala, if your father were only here now . . .

SHAKUNTALA (*Petulantly*). Well, what would happen then ?

THE TWO FRIENDS. He would content this noble guest with his choicest offering.

SHAKUNTALA. No, no ! You express the fancy of your own heart. I will not listen to your talk.

KING. May I ask you two something concerning your friend ?

THE TWO FRIENDS. Your request is a boon.

KING. The venerable Kanva has always lived the life of a holy man. How, then, can your friend be called his daughter ?

ANASUYA. Listen, noble lord. There is a certain royal saint of great power whose family name is Kaushika.

KING. True. I listen.

ANASUYA. Learn, then, that he is really the father of our friend. The venerable Kanva is her father only by fostering her when she was deserted.

KING. "Deserted"—that word raises my curiosity. Pray, tell me all from the beginning.

ANASUYA. Listen, sir. Once as the royal saint was performing

severe penance on the shore of the River Gautami, the gods, alarmed by his rising power, sent the nymph Menaka to disturb his devotion.

KING. Such is the dread which the deities have of the devotion of others.

ANASUYA. As, then, in the season of the descending spring the saint saw the entrancing beauty of that nymph . . . (*Stops short, abashed.*)

KING. The remainder is easily divined. In short, Shakuntala is the offspring of that nymph.

ANASUYA. Just so.

KING. That seems natural.

How could such charm from mortal spring ?

Not from the bosom of the earth

The lightning's tremulous splendor darts.

(*Shakuntala remains seated with downcast eyes.*)

KING (*aside*). My heart's desire may then be indulged. Nevertheless, remembering her friend's playful allusion to her desire for a husband, my mind is still perplexed by doubts.

PRIYAMVADA (*gazing with a smile at Shakuntala, and then turning to the king*). I think, sir, you still have something on your mind. (*Shakuntala reproves her friend with her finger.*)

KING. You surmise rightly. My desire to know more about a holy life leads me to ask another question.

PRIYAMVADA. Do not scruple to do so. Hermit people may be questioned without reserve.

KING. Well, I would like to know about your friend :

Must she observe, until she wed,

Her hermit vow opposed to love ?

Or must she dwell forever here

With darling fawns with eyes like hers ?

PRIYAMVADA. Noble sir, even in the performance of her religious vow she is dependent on the will of another. Yet it is her protector's purpose some day to give her in marriage to a husband worthy of her.

KING (*aside*). His desire may be easily realized.

Be hopeful now, my troubled heart !

Your doubt is changed to certainty.

What you have thought a burning spark,

Is now a gem that may be touched.

SHAKUNTALA (*reproachfully to Anasuya*). Anasuya, I shall leave you !

ANASUYA. Why ?

SHAKUNTALA. To report Priyamvada and her foolish talk to our venerable matron Gautami.

ANASUYA. My dear friend, you could not, so wilfully neglecting the duties of hospitality, leave a distinguished guest. (*Shakuntala moves away, silent.*)

KING (*on the point of arresting her, but checking himself. Aside*).

Ah, a lover's manner betrays his desire, for,  
When I would stop the hermit maid,  
Decorum checked me all at once.  
Though from my place I did not stir,  
I seem from rising just returned.

PRIYAMVADA (*holding Shakuntala back*). It is not becoming for you, dear, to leave us.

SHAKUNTALA (*frowning*). Why not ?

PRIYAMVADA. Because you are bound by your promise to water two plants for me. Do so, then. When you have paid your debt you may leave. (*Forces her back.*)

KING. I can see, gentle maiden, that the lady is exhausted with watering her shrubs.

The heavy jar has tried her strength :  
Her shoulders droop, her arms are flushed ;  
With violent breathing even yet  
Her bosom heaves ; a pearly net  
Of perspiration on her cheek  
Has caught the flower of her ear ;  
And with her hand she tries to hold  
Her loosened locks, their fillet dropped.

May I, then, discharge her debt to you ?

(*Presents a ring to Priyamvada. The two friends, reading the king's name on the signet, look at one another in surprise.*)

KING. Do not take me for what I am not ! I have received that ring from the king. Consider me simply as a royal officer.

PRIYAMVADA. It is not right, then, that you should part with that ring from your finger. By your simple request, sire, she is now relieved from her obligation. (*With a smile.*) Dear



Shakuntala, this compassionate stranger—or this great prince—has set you free. You may now retire.

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). If I could only control myself ! (*Aloud*)

What right have you, pray, to send me off or to retain me ?

KING (*gazing at Shakuntala. Aside*). May she, perhaps, feel toward me as I toward her ? I have at least some reason to hope. Because,

Though she exchange no word with me,  
She bends her ear to all I say ;  
And though she turn her face away,  
Her gaze is often fixed on me.

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Oh, oh, hermits, hasten to protect the animals of the sacred grove ! King Dushyanta, out hunting, is close by.

Just as a swarming locust cloud  
Illumined by the sunset glow,  
The dust that prancing horses raised  
Descends upon our grove, where hang  
On spreading branches new-washed robes.

And look !

Affrighted by the royal car,  
An elephant invades the grove,  
A live destruction of our rites.  
He terrifies the herding deer  
And drags with mighty feet along  
A chain the tangling creepers formed  
And rends a tree with fiercest blows,  
His tusk remaining in its trunk. (*All listen, agitated.*)

KING (*aside*). Ah, my retinue, in search of me, have broken into this holy grove ! Well, I must hasten to find them.

THE TWO FRIENDS. Sire, we are frightened by this accident. Permit us to return to our cottage.

KING (*quickly*). Go, ladies. I shall take care that no harm comes to your hermitage. (*All arise.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS. We are ashamed to refer to our inadequate hospitality, noble sir, as a reason for seeing you again.

KING. No, no, indeed ! By the mere sight of you, noble maidens, I have been richly entertained. (*The three girls move away.*)

SHAKUNTALA. Anasuya, a prickly kusha grass has stung my

foot ; a kuruvaka bush has caught my garment. Assist me while I disentangle it. (*Glancing at the king during a feigned delay : then off with her two companions.*)

KING. My desire to return to the city has now gone. I will join my attendants and make them encamp near the holy ground. Truly, I cannot turn my mind from Shakuntala. My body moves ahead, my thought Discordantly moves always back, Just as an ensign's silken cloth When it is borne against the gale.

## ACT SECOND

*Scene—Forest near the Hermitage. Enter the King's Jester, morose.*

JESTER (*sighing*). Wretched luck ! Here I am, all jaded from following this sport-loving king. "There's a deer !"—"There goes a boar !"—"Look, a tiger !" he will shout, and in the heat of midday we are rushed from jungle to jungle, struggling over paths where hardly a shade can be found this burning season. And, in the midst of all this glory, we must drink the nauseous water of the mountain streams seasoned with the pungent admixture of leaves, and quiet our hunger at odd hours with meat roasted on spits. And even at night a poor fellow's joints are too bruised by this eternal galloping to allow any comfortable rest. Then, again, at early dawn I am awakened by the racket of those contemptible fowlers starting out into the forest. But that isn't the end of my woes ! Oh, no ! A new boil is rising on the old. For yesterday, while we were lagging behind, the king in his pursuit of a deer rushed into a hermit grove, and there, by ill luck, caught sight of a hermit's daughter called Shakuntala. No thought of returning to the city any more ! Early dawn found him today sleepless, ever thinking of that damsel. What's to be done ? I will be on the watch for him when he has finished attiring himself. (*Walking and looking about.*) Ah, there he comes,

my dear friend, attended by his attendant women, the Yavana, with bows in their hands and garlands of wild flowers. Very well ! I must appear lame and crippled. Could I only in that way have some rest ! (*Stands leaning on his staff.*)

(*Enter King Dushyanta with his Followers.*)

KING. Not lightly may I win the fair,

Although her manner cheers my hope

Not yet triumphant is my love ;

But mutual longing is a bliss ! (*Smiling.*)

That is how a lover beguiles him-self, judging the feeling of his heart's beloved by his own

The tender glances of her eyes,

Although they were not turned on me ,

Her lingering step when, as it seemed,

She left with languid, amorous gait ,

Her fretful answer to her friend

When checked by her and told to stay

All that, indeed, was meant for me

How swift a lover's eye to see !

JESTER (*with unchanged attitude*). Ah, my friend, I cannot hold out my hands. So I must greet you with words alone.

KING. How come your crippled state ?

JESTER. How can you ask why my eyes water when you have struck them ?

KING. I am sure I don't understand you. Speak more intelligibly.

JESTER. Well, my friend, when the upright reed mimics the bended plant, where is the cause ? Its own free will, or the rush of the river ?

KING. The rush of the river, of course

JESTER. Just so you are the cause of my crippled state.

KING. In what way ?

JESTER. Ever since you left the state affairs to take care of themselves, and turned a savage in a wild, man-forsaken region like this, I have no more control of my poor limbs, whose joints are sadly bruised by always chasing wild beasts. So I beg this favor of you : let me off only for a day, to have some rest !

KING (*aside*). This fellow has spoken the word. Even I am

loath to hunt the deer now, with a mind always thinking of Kanva's daughter.

I cannot bend my stringed bow  
With well-aimed dart against those fawns  
Which, dwelling near my love's abode,  
Have taught their tender glance to her.

JESTER. (*Looking in the king's face*). My master speaks only what he has on his mind, and my prayer was a voice in the wilderness.

KING (*smiling*). What else could I think of than to regard a friend's request ?

JESTER. Long live the king ! (*About to leave*.)

KING. Stop, my friend ! I have something else to tell you.

JESTER. At your disposition.

KING. When you are rested, you must assist me in an affair which will not tire you.

JESTER. In relishing some delicacies, perhaps ?

KING. I will tell you by and by.

JESTER. Now is the right time.

KING (*calling toward the door*). Ho ! there.

WARDER (*entering*). At Your Majesty's command.

KING. Raivatika, bid the commander of the forces appear.

WARDER. Yes, sire. (*Exit, and re-enters with the commander*.) Approach, noble sir. There is the king waiting to give you some order

COMMANDER (*looking at the king*). Hunting may be reputed an evil, but its effect on my royal master is excellent.

Look, vigorous, like an elephant  
That roams the mountain, stands the king,  
His sturdy frame, with arms and breast  
Scarred by the bowstring's ceaseless wear,  
Enduring firm the burning sun,  
Sustaining lightly every toil,  
And swelling with a sinewy strength  
That hides its loss of rounding flesh.

(*Approaching the king*)

Victory to my king ! We have tracked the wild beast in the forest. Then why delay ?

KING. My jester Mathavya's words have relaxed my eagerness to hunt.

COMMANDER (*aside to the jester*). You persevere in your objections, my friend. But I must obey the king's desire. (*Aloud.*) That scatterbrain talks folly. Is not your Majesty the best proof of it ? Consider, O king,

The hunter's slender, sinewy frame—  
How light it is, how fit for toil !  
The quick emotions of the game,  
Their fear, their anger, he beholds,  
And glories when his whetted dart  
Unerring strikes the fleeting mark.  
The chase is wrongly named a vice.

What pleasure can compare with this ?

JESTER. Off with you, preacher of toils ! His Majesty now desires rest. But you may keep on straying from forest to forest until you fall into the jaws of some old bear hungry for your nose.

KING. My excellent commander, we are now near a grove of devotion : So I cannot appreciate your words. For the present, therefore,

The buffaloes may sport in ponds,  
And whip the waters with their horns ;  
The herding deer, by scattered groups,  
In cooling shadows ruminate ;  
The crowding boars, disturbed by none,  
Dig musta roots in marshy pools ;  
And this my trusty bow awhile,  
With tightened string unloosed, repose.

COMMANDER. As it pleases your Majesty.

KING. Therefore call back the beaters sent out to surround the forest. My troops must not disturb this sacred grove. Prohibit them from doing so. Remember,

These hermits' deeply tranquil souls  
Conceal an all-consuming flame ;  
And, if by heating agents stirred,  
Like crystals—cool unto the touch—  
They send out that consuming flame.

COMMANDER. It shall be done, as Your Majesty commands.

JESTER. Begone, son of a slave ! All your fine arguments in favor of toil are tumbled. (*Exit commander.*)

KING (*looking at his attendants*). Here, women, take my hunting

suit. And you, Raivatika, attend to your duty.

ATTENDANTS. We obey, mighty king. (*Exeunt.*)

JESTER. Well, you have now cleared this place of flies. Be seated on this stone slab with the shading tree as your canopy, and I may also have a comfortable seat.

KING. You lead the way.

JESTER. No, you go, sire. (*Both go to the slab and seat themselves.*)

KING. Mathavya, your eyes have not yet been truly feasted, for they have not beheld the loveliest of beings.

JESTER. Indeed, and yet I have Your Majesty before me !

KING. Everybody exalts his own. But I am talking of Shakuntala, the ornament of this hermitage.

JESTER (*aside*). There it is ! But I am not going to encourage him. (*Aloud.*) Well, my friend, if she is a hermit's daughter she cannot be wooed by you. What benefit is it, then, for you to see her ?

KING. My friend, the heart of a descendant of Puru does not seek forbidden things.

This maid is not the hermit's child.

Born of a heavenly nymph, she came,

Deserted by her, to his charge,

As a broken jasmine leans

Upon the sturdy sun-plant's stalk.

JESTER (*smiling*). Slighting those gems of women in your own palace for his new fancy seems to me like losing relish for sweet dates, & yearn for a sour tamarind.

KING. You can speak of her so only because you have not seen her.

JESTER. She must indeed be charming to deserve your admiration.

KING. Well, my good friend, why waste words on what cannot be portrayed ?

The Creator, gathering in his mind

All lovely forms, depicted her

And breathed new life into his work.

And always when I contemplate

All her beauty and the Maker's might,

She seems to me a peerless gem.

JESTER. If that is so, she must certainly cut out all other beauties.

KING. And this is what troubles my mind :

I cannot know whom Fate shall once  
Permit to own this faultless form,  
A bloom whose perfume none has drunk,  
A bud by human hand uncut,  
A pure, unperforated pearl,  
Fresh honey not by mortal sipped,  
The perfect fruit of holy deeds.

JESTER. Well, then, make haste to rescue her, lest she fall  
into the hands of some greasy-headed ascetic.

KING. The honoured lady is dependent on another, and her  
venerable foster father is not at home.

JESTER. But tell me, though, what kind of eyes did she give  
you ? Any love in them ?

KING. Hermit maidens are by nature bashful and reserved.  
She looked aside before my gaze ;  
She smiled, but with a feigned pretense ;  
And so, by coyness checked, her love  
Was half concealed and half revealed.

JESTER. You would not expect her, I suppose, to fly to your  
embrace the first time you saw her.

KING. Again, when we departed, she betrayed—though  
always with modesty—an inclination for me For  
The tender girl was hardly gone  
When by pretense she stopped and cried :  
“A kusha grass has stung my foot !”  
And gazed around, and feigned to free  
Her robe, as if by brambles caught.

JESTER. You had best be provided with a stock of provisions,  
I see. It is evident that you are going to make this penance  
grove your pleasure garden.

KING. You must know, my good friend, that I was recognized  
by some hermits. So devise some good excuse for visiting  
the hermitage again.

JESTER. What excuse is needed ? Are you not the king ?

KING. What if I am ?

JESTER. Simply tell them you have come for your tithe.

KING. Fool ! These hermits pay a different kind of tribute,  
which I prize higher than heaps of jewels. You should know  
The people's tribute to their king

Is transitory, but for all time

Penance pays the hermits' tithe.

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Good ! Our search is successful.

There is the king.

KING (*listening*). Ah, that deep and calm voice is surely a hermit's.

WARDER (*entering*). Victory to the king ! Two young hermits are in waiting outside.

KING. Bring them in without delay.

WARDER. I will. (*Goes out and returns with two young hermits. The hermits regard the king.*)

FIRST HERMIT Ah ! What splendid form ! And yet what confidence it inspires ! But it is natural in a prince who has deserved the title of "royal saint."

Though he may have attained the stage

Where life's full pleasures are enjoyed,

Yet he stores up devotion's meed

By gentle rule, from day to day.

And, famed for pious self-restraint,

His hallowed name of "royal saint,"

By Indra's minstrel couples sung,

To heaven constantly ascends.

SECOND HERMIT This Dushyanta, O Gautama, is a friend of the divine demon destroyer.

FIRST HERMIT. Indeed ?

SECOND HERMIT. It is not strange if he whose arm

Is mighty as a castle bar

Should govern this entire earth,

Confined by darkling ocean floods,

Since even the gods, who always war

In battles with the demons, look

For victory to his braced bow

And mighty Indra's thunderbolt.

BOTH THE HERMITS (*approaching*). Victory to you, O king !

KING (*rising from his seat*). Hail to you both !

HERMITS. Blessings upon Your Majesty ! (*They offer him fruit.*)

KING (*reverently accepting the offering*). How can I serve you ?

HERMITS. The dwellers in this sacred grove have heard of your presence here. Therefore we come to Your Majesty with a humble petition.



KING. What is their command ?

HERMITS. During the absence of the great saint, our venerable Kanva, the demons have been disturbing our sacrifices. Deign, therefore, accompanied by your charioteer, to take up your abode in our groves for a few nights.

KING. I am honored by this request.

JESTER (*aside*). Yes, a very opportune request !

KING (*smiling*). Raivatika ! Tell the charioteer from me to bring about the chariot and my bow !

WARDER. I will, sire.

HERMITS (*joyfully*). This noble deed befits you well,  
     Heroic fathers' worthy son !  
     A Puru scion is enjoined  
     To save from trembling all distressed.

KING (*with a bow*). Go first, reverend hermits. I will follow you immediately.

HERMITS. Be victorious ! (*Exeunt.*)

KING. Mathavya, do you not desire to see Shakuntala ?

JESTER. I was brimful of desire to see her only a moment ago ; but now, after that piece of news about the demons, not a single drop is left.

KING. Never fear. Shall you not be near me ?

JESTER. I will be your brave companion.

WARDER (*entering*). The chariot stands ready to bear you to victory. But here is Karabhaka, a courier, just arrived from the city with a message from the queen, your mother.

KING. What do you say ? Sent by my mother ?

WARDER. Just so.

KING. Let him enter at once.

WARDER. Yes, sire. (*Goes out, and returns with Karabhaka.*)  
     There is the king. Approach.

KARABHAKA. Victory, victory to our protector ! The queen bids me say that the sacrifice for her son's welfare will be held in four days ; and she hopes Your Majesty will honour her by your presence then.

KING. Now what choice am I to make ? My obligation to these hermits calls me one way, my venerable mother's request another ; and neither duty should be neglected.

JESTER. Well, take your position between the two, like Trishanka ; between heaven and earth

KING. Truly, I am perplexed.

Yes, like the current of a stream  
When it divides against a rock,  
My mind is split against the task  
To act in different places so. (*Reflecting.*)

My friend, you have always been received by the queen as a son. So return to her and inform her that it is my bounden duty to assist the hermits, and kindly discharge the part of a son to Her Majesty.

JESTER. Surely, you cannot suppose me to be scared by those demons ?

KING. Ah, great Brahman, how could you suspect me of such a thing ?

JESTER. Then I must travel as befits the king's younger brother.

KING. Yes, that there may be no disturbance, I shall send my whole retinue with you.

JESTER (*elated*). Now I feel like a real prince.

KING (*aside*). He is a light-headed fellow. He may perhaps let out the truth about my present pursuit to the women of the palace. Well, I must talk to him. (*Aloud to the jester, taking him by the hand.*) My dear companion, I take up my stay in the hermit grove out of veneration for its holy inhabitants. Honestly, my love for that hermit girl Shakuntala was all a fiction. Only consider :

Who is that maid, brought up with fawns,  
Remote from love ? And who am I ?  
Let not a word of sportive love  
Be taken earnestly, my friend !

### PRELUDE TO ACT THIRD

*Scene—The Hermitage. Enter a young Brahman with kusha grass.*

BRAHMAN. Great, indeed, is the power of king Dushyanta. Hardly has he entered the grove, and our rites are no more disturbed.

What need has he to fit his dart ?  
 The distant twanging of the string,  
 Like angry roarings of his bow,  
 Dispels the troublous demon horde.

I will therefore bring this kusha grass to the sacrificial priest to be strewn round the altar. (*Advancing a few steps and looking about ; then speaking to Priyamvada, still behind the scenes.*) Priyamvada, for whom are you bringing that ushira ointment and those fiber-fringed lotus leaves ? (*Listening.*) What do you say ? That Shakuntala is very sick from exposure to the sun, and that you bring her cooling ointments ? Nurse her with care, Priyamvada, for she is dear to our venerable father Kanva as his life. I will bring Gautami healing water, hallowed in the sacrifice, for Shakuntala. (*Exit.*)

### ACT THIRD

*Scene—The Hermitage. Enter the King, distracted by love.*

KING (*sighing thoughtfully*). I know this maiden has a guard,  
 And know his might, by penance gained.  
 Yet my heart can no more return  
 From her than water from a dale.

God of the flowery shafts ! By you and by the moon, whatever confidence you both inspire, we lovers are all deceived.  
 It's said that flowers are your shafts,  
 It's said that moonbeams frigid are ;  
 But neither, as we feel, is true :  
 Your flowery darts are hard as steel,  
 And burning are the moon's cold rays !

Mighty god of love ! Have you no pity on me ? (*In a tone of anguish.*) How can your arrows, if headed with flowers, be so sharp ? Ah, I understand !

As fires burn in ocean depths,  
 Shiva's wrath still burns in you !  
 How else could you, soul-stirring god,  
 Consume my kind to ashes scorched ?

Nevertheless,

Forever may the mighty god  
Be welcomed so to torture me,  
If he but strike me for her sake,  
That maid, with deep, bewitching eyes !

You god of love ! Even when so appealed to, you do not  
pity me.

Have I not by a hundred vows  
Elated you, the spirit-god ?  
Should you, then, tightly draw your bow  
To hurl your arrows against me ?

*(Walking in a disconsolate mood)*

Now that the sacrificial rites are over, and those who attend  
them free, where shall I drag myself to allay my weariness ?  
(*Sighing.*) What better relief than the sight of my beloved ?  
I must seek her. (*Gazing at the sun.*) Probably Shakuntala  
will be spending the heated midday hours with her two  
friends in some vine-enclosed bower on the banks of the  
Malini. I will walk in that direction. (*Walking and looking  
about.*) The slender maiden must have passed only a short  
while ago through this avenue of young trees. Because

Those broken tubes are not yet closed  
Which bore the blossoms she has culled ;  
And look, these severed flower-stems  
Are bleeding yet with milky juice.

*(Inhaling the breeze.)*

Oh, how delightful the breeze is here !

Fold, lotus-scented breeze, which bears  
The moisture of the rippling wave,  
Into your cool embrace these limbs  
By the incorporeal god consumed !

*(Walking farther and looking about.)*

She must be resting in that arbor inclosed by the plantation  
of canes and shaded by vines For

Here at the entrance, in the sand,  
I see a line of recent steps,  
Marked light in front, but by the weight  
Of rounded hips more deep behind.

I will peep through the branches. (*Approaches joyfully.*)  
Ah, my eyes are blessed with supreme happiness. There she

is, my soul's desire, attended by her friends. On that stone seat, strewn with flowers, she is reclining. I may now overhear their confidential conversation. (*Stands concealed looking at them.*)

(*Shakuntala becomes visible, and her two Friends fanning her.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS (*tenderly, while fanning Shakuntala.*) Dearest Shakuntala, is this breeze, raised by the lotus leaves, refreshing to you ?

SHAKUNTALA. Dear friends, why should you be fanning me ? (*The two Friends look sadly at each other.*)

KING. Shakuntala indeed seems to be very ill. (*Thoughtfully.*) Can it be owing to the heat ? Or does my heart suggest the true cause of her illness ? (*Gazing at her passionately.*) Away with all doubt !

My darling's form, disfavored now  
By ointments spread upon her breast,  
And by that drooping lotus ring,  
Is ever charming none the less.  
The glow of love and noonday sun  
May be akin in their effect,  
But love alone, I think, inflicts  
That sweet disorder upon maids.

PRIYAMVADA (*aside to Anasuya*). Dear Anasuya, ever since her first meeting with the great king Shakuntala has been indisposed. May not this very meeting be the cause of her illness ?

ANASUYA. Even my mind, dear, harbors such a suspicion. Well, I will frankly ask her. (*Aloud.*) Dear Shakuntala, I am about to ask you a question. Your indisposition is really serious.

SHAKUNTALA (*half rising from her couch*). What do you wish to ask ?

ANASUYA. Dearest Shakuntala, we are not familiar with love matters. But from what I have read in stories about the condition of lovers I fancy such is also your condition. Tell me frankly the cause of your disorder. Without understanding it well no remedy can be rightly applied.

KING. Anasuya confirms my own suspicion.

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). I am indeed deeply in love. But I cannot at once confess it to them.

PRIYAMVADA. Anasuya speaks truly, dear Shakuntala. Why give so little heed to your illness? Every day you are wasting away. Only your lovely complexion remains unchanged.

KING. Priyamvada speaks most justly.

Her features waste, her orb'ing breast  
Less amply swells, her slender waist  
Is slenderer still, her shoulders droop,  
And all her roseate hue is paled.—  
Tormented so with love, she seems  
Both piteous and surpassing fair,  
Like some poor madhav creeper, touched  
By burning winds that scorch her leaves.

SHAKUNTALA. To whom else, my dear friend, if not to you, should I reveal the cause of my ailment? But shall I not make you anxious?

THE TWO FRIENDS. The very reason for our solicitude is that grief is alleviated when shared by sympathizing friends.

KING. Pressed by her friends in joy and grief,

The maid will sure avow to them  
The secret of her troubled heart.  
And though she once encouraged me  
With furtive glances full of love,  
Yet now with anxious throbbing breast  
I wait to hear her secret told.

SHAKUNTALA. Well, then, my friend, ever since the sainted king who is now the guardian of our grove came before my sight . . . (*Interrupts herself*)

PRIYAMVADA. Speak out, my friend!

SHAKUNTALA. Ever since then I have been in this state through longing for him.

KING (*enraptured*). Now I have heard what I was yearning to hear!

That very god who lit the flame  
Allays the fever of my soul,  
Just as the day whose heat declines  
Revives the world with cooling clouds.

SHAKUNTALA. So contrive, if it please you, some means through which I may find favor with the saintly king, or prepare to pour out for me the seasamum water used for the dead.

KING. These words dispel all my doubts.

PRIYAMVADA (*apart to Anasuya*). Dear Anasuya, love has affected her deeply, and there should be no delay. Her inclination may properly have our approval, since she has fixed her heart on one who is an ornament of the Puru dynasty.

ANASUYA. What you say is most true.

PRIYAMVADA (*aloud*). Hail ! dear Shakuntala. Your love is a worthy love. Where should a noble river pour out its waters, unless into the ocean ? What other tree than the mango may support the blooming madhavi creeper ?

KING. Why wonder if the Vishakha constellation yearns for the young moon ?

ANASUYA. But how shall we accomplish speedily and secretly our friend's desire ?

PRIYAMVADA. Speedily is easy, but secretly—that is difficult.

ANASUYA. How do you mean ?

PRIYAMVADA. Did not the king by loving glances betray his affection for her, and does he not these last days appear to be wasting with sleeplessness ?

KING (*looking at himself*). Surely so I am. For  
 As night by night I lean my arm  
 Again st my head, and burning tears  
 Dim this jeweled bracelet's splendor,  
 I see it gliding from the wrist  
 Still down, unchecked by bowstring scars,  
 And vainly try to fix it there

PRIYAMVADA (*reflecting*). I have it ! Let Shakuntala write him a love-letter. I will conceal it in a flower and reach him that, pretending that it is the remains of a sacred offering.

ANASUYA. Your very ingenious device pleases me ; but what does Shakuntala say ?

SHAKUNTALA. I am just considering my friend's proposition.

PRIYAMVADA. Now think of some pretty little verse with an allusion to your own feeling.

SHAKUNTALA. Well, I am trying to think. But my heart troubles me with apprehension lest I meet his reproof.

KING (*elated*).

He whose reproval, timid maid,  
 You apprehend, repines for you.

A lover's quest may thrive or fail

But how could beauty ever fail

To gain with ease her chosen love ?

THE TWO FRIENDS. How you undervalue your own charm !

Who would ever, think you, prevent with the skirt of his robe the light of the autumnal moon from cooling his fever ?

SHAKUNTALA (*smiling*). Well, I must then do as you urge, I suppose. (*Sits up, meditating*).

KING. A charming view ! beholding which my eyes forget to wink.

As she designs her tender verse

Her finely penciled brow is raised ;

And thrilled with passion is her face

Betraying all her love for me.

SHAKUNTALA. I have thought of a stanza, dear friends, but there are no writing materials here.

PRIYAMVADA. Inscribe the letters with your nail on the lotus leaf, which is smooth as a parrot's breast.

SHAKUNTALA (*writing as asked*). Listen, now, and tell me whether I have succeeded or not.

THE TWO FRIENDS. We are all attention,

SHAKUNTALA (*reciting*). Thy heart I know not ; as for me,

Whose yearnings center all in thee,

Love tortures with a burning ray,

Thou cruel one, both night and day.

KING (*rapidly stepping forward*). Love, slender maid, may torture thee,

But not consume, as it does me.

The day-star in the glare of noon

The lotus burns, but blights the moon.

THE TWO FRIENDS. We rejoice that our desire is so soon fulfilled. (*Shakuntala attempts to rise.*)

KING. No, no, do not trouble yourself !

No homage, gentle maid, where you

Lie languishing with fevered limbs,

Perfumed with broken lotus stalks,

Upon your flowery couch ! No ! no !

ANASUYA. Consent, noble sire, to be seated on the ledge of this stone. (*The king seats himself. Shakuntala confused.*)

PRIYAMVADA. Your mutual affection is evident. Nevertheless,



my love for my friend prompts me to give utterance to a thing well understood, no doubt, by you already.

KING. Do not hold anything back, sweet girl. To be silent where one should speak may cause subsequent regret.

PRIYAMVADA. It pertains to a king, as I suppose, to free from suffering anyone in his realm who is in distress.

KING. Such, assuredly, is my duty.

PRIYAMVADA. Know, then, that our dear friend here is through love for you brought into this state of suffering. It is, then, due that you should restore her to life.

KING. Sweet maiden, our inclination is mutual. I am wholly honored thereby.

SHAKUNTALA (*looking at Priyamvada*). Why, my friend, detain this saintly king, who must long for the ladies of his palace ?

KING. My heart's possession, lovely maid,

Whose eyes are maddening wine to me !

If you should think my heart another's,

When it yearns alone for you,

Then you would cruelly slay again

One slain before by Kanva's shafts !

ANASUYA. Kings are reported to have many consorts. Act, then, so toward our beloved friend that her kindred may have no cause for regret.

KING. My reply is short, good girl :

Of many consorts two alone

Shall be the glory of my race :

My sea-girt realm and this your friend !

THE TWO FRIENDS. We feel assured.

PRIYAMVADA. (*looking aside*). Anasuya, see how our little fawn, anxiously looking this way, seeks its mother. Come, let us help the little thing to find her.

SHAKUNTALA. Ah, dear friends, you leave me here unprotected. One of you must remain !

THE TWO FRIENDS. Unprotected ! When the protector of the world is at your side ! (*Exeunt.*)

SHAKUNTALA. What ! They have both left me.

KING. Be reassured ! Your adorer is ready to serve you.

May I with cooling lotus fans

Allay the fever of your frame ?

Or take your lily-tinted feet,

Sweet-molded maid, upon my lap,  
And, gently stroking, soothe your pain ?

SHAKUNTALA. No, I must not act wrongly toward those I am bound to venerate. (*Rises and attempts to leave.*)

KING. Beloved, the heat of the day has not yet subsided, and your body is feeble.

Why leaving so the flowery couch  
Where lotus leaves keep your breast cool,  
Expose to burning noonday rays  
Your limbs enfeebled by distress ?

SHAKUNTALA. Son of Puru, observe decorum. I love you, true, but have no right to dispose of myself.

KING. Timid maid, dispel your fear concerning your honored kindred. The venerable master of this hermitage knows the law, and when he finds out our union he will not condemn you.

Often, as tradition tells,  
Have daughters of a royal saint  
Been wedded by Gandharva rites,  
And yet their fathers' blessing won.

SHAKUNTALA. Let me go, please. I must have the approval of my female friends.

KING. Well, I will let you go.

SHAKUNTALA. When ?

KING. First may I, thirsting, gently drink,  
Fair maid, the nectar of your lip,  
As the bee sips the honeyed juice  
Of tender, fresh, untainted buds.

(*Attempts to raise her face Shakuntala resisting.*)

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Loving flamingo, bid farewell to your mate. Night is at hand.

SHAKUNTALA (*in confusion*). Sire, surely, Gautami is coming to inquire about my health. Hide yourself there in that bush.

KING. I will. (*Conceals himself.*)

(*Enter Gautami with a vase in her hand and the two Friends.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS. This way, venerable Gautami.

GAUTAMI (*approaching Shakuntala*). My child, is your fever allayed ?

SHAKUNTALA. Venerable mother, I feel a grateful change.

GAUTAMI. This darbha water will restore your strength.  
*(Sprinkling Shakuntala on the head.)* My Dear child, the day is closing ; come, let us go to the cottage. *(All moving off.)*

SHAKUNTALA *(aside)*. Oh, my heart, when your happiness was within reach you feared to enjoy it. Troubled and regretful, what anguish will now be yours ? *(Advancing a few steps, then stopping. Aloud.)* Sweet bower with your encircling creepers ! Soother of my suffering ! Until my enjoyment can be renewed I bid you farewell. *(Exit reluctantly with the others.)*

KING *(seating himself again on the stone. Sighing.)* Ah, what obstacles there are to the accomplishment of our wishes !

Her face I raised, but all in vain,  
 I could not kiss its ruby lips,  
 For stammering her refusal still,  
 And turning her away from me,  
 The charming, lovely eyelashed maid  
 Held her lips guarded with her hand.

Where shall I now go ? I will linger awhile in this vine-encircled bower, once occupied, but now forsaken, by my beloved Shakuntala.

Here, on this stone, her flowery couch  
 Still bears the impress of her form ;  
 Here is her faded verse of love  
 Inscribed upon a lotus leaf ;  
 And here—as from her arm it slipped—  
 Her ring of lotus fibers twined !  
 As I behold it all, I scarce  
 Can tear myself away from you,  
 Vetasa grove, though she is gone.

A VOICE. O king !

The evening rites begin, but dark  
 As nightly clouds the demon ghosts  
 In lurid, terrifying crowds  
 Are swarming round the altar fires.

KING. I come ! I come !

## PRELUDE TO ACT FOURTH

*Scene—The garden of the Hermitage. Enter Anasuya and Priyamvada culling flowers.*

ANASUYA. Dear Priyamvada, although my heart is consoled when I consider that Shakuntala by this Gandharva marriage is made happy in her union with a spouse worthy of her, yet I am not without anxiety.

PRIYAMVADA. Why, then ?

ANASUYA. The sainted king, as you know, has returned to the city, gratefully dismissed by our hermits after the successful performance of the sacrifice. He is now again among his royal consorts. Shall he retain the remembrance of what has happened, or not ?

PRIYAMVADA. Do not fear. Men of his noble character are not so changeable. But I am anxious to know what father Kanva will say when he learns what has happened.

ANASUYA. I think he will approve of the marriage.

PRIYAMVADA. What makes you think so ?

ANASUYA. It has always from the first been his purpose to bestow Shakuntala on a husband worthy of her. Since now destiny has vouchsafed her such a spouse, is not the venerable Kanva's desire happily accomplished ?

PRIYAMVADA (*looking at the flower-basket*). My dear friend, we have gathered flowers enough for the sacred offering.

ANASUYA. Well, is not also the guardian deity of our dear friend Shakuntala to be honored ?

PRIYAMVADA. Certainly, you are right. (*They continue gathering flowers.*)

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*.) It is I, give heed !

ANASUYA (*listening*). That must be a new guest announcing his arrival.

PRIYAMVADA. Surely, Shakuntala must be at the cottage. (*Aside.*) Yet her thought is wandering elsewhere.

ANASUYA. That will do now ! We have flowers enough.

THE VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Woe unto you who are so neglectful of a guest !

He whom alone you think about,  
Not heeding me, a pious saint,

Shall now forget you, spite of all,  
Just as the sot forgets his talk !

PRIYAMVADA. Ah, ah ! An unfortunate thing has happened. Shakuntala, in her unsuspecting heart, has offended someone whom it was her duty to honor. (*Looking toward the scenes.*) Ah, that someone is none else than the great saint Durvasa, the man whose anger is so easily provoked. It is he who has just uttered that curse, and he is now retiring with great strides, trembling with anger, and so rapidly that nothing could detain him. His wrath is like a consuming fire.

ANASUYA. Hurry ! Throw yourself at his feet, and implore him to return ! I will prepare our deferential offering of water.

PRIYAMVADA. I hasten (*Off.*)

ANASUYA (*hurrying away, and stumbling*). Ah, in my hurry I am stumbling and dropping my flower-basket. (*Gathers up the flowers.*)

PRIYAMVADA (*returning*). Oh, my friend, he is a grim character. Do you think he would listen to my friendly persuasion ? Yet at last he showed a grain of mercy.

ANASUYA (*smiling*). Even a grain was much for him. Say on.

PRIYAMVADA. When he would not return I besought him, saying : "Pardon Kanva's daughter, venerable sage ! This is her first offence, and she does not know the sanctity of your person."

ANASUYA. And then ? then ?

PRIYAMVADA. "My words," he replied, "must be fulfilled. Yet, at the sight of the ring of recognition, the spell shall cease." So saying, he disappeared.

ANASUYA. I can now breathe again ! The saintly king at his departure fastened on Shakuntala's finger a ring with his own signet as token of remembrance. She has, then, in her own possession the remedy for her misfortune.

PRIYAMVADA. Come, dear friend, let us now perform our divine service. (*They walk away.*)

PRIYAMVADA (*looking forward*). O Anasuya, look, there sits our beloved friend, motionless as a picture, with her head leaning against her left hand. She is so absorbed in thinking of her spouse that she is unconscious of her own self. How much more, then, of any passing stranger !

ANASUYA. Let this accident remain a secret between us two,

Priyamvada. Our dear friend is too delicate of constitution.  
We must spare her feelings.

PRIYAMVALA. Who would like to sprinkle the tender jasmine  
with scalding water ? (*Exeunt.*)

## ACT FOURTH

*Scene—The Hermitage. Enter a Young Disciple just arisen  
from his couch.*

DISCIPLE. The venerable Kanva, just returned from his pilgrimage, has commanded me to see what time it is. And so I am here in the open air to ascertain how far the night has advanced. (*Walking and observing the heavens.*) Ah, it is dawn already. Look !

The moon sinks down into the west,  
While in the east the glorious sun  
Behind the herald dawn appears.  
So rise and set, in constant change,  
Those shining orbs, and regulate  
The very life of this our world ! And now :  
The moon is gone ; and then no more  
The charming lily of the night  
Delights my eye—her beauty now  
A sweet remembrance, nothing else.  
Just so a tender maiden mourns,  
Her absent love, disconsolate,  
The dewdrops on the jujube  
By early morn impurpled, burn.  
The waking peacock leaves its place  
Upon the thatch ; and the deer start  
From their soft, hoof-imprinted couch,  
And curve their backs, and stretch their limbs.

ANASUYA (*entering suddenly*). However ignorant I am of the world, I can readily perceive that the king is doing Shakuntala a great wrong.

DISCIPLE. Well, I must inform my master that it is time for the burnt offering.

ANASUYA. I am all awake, but what am I to do ? My hands and feet do not willingly turn to their usual occupation. Now that our friend with her innocent heart has trusted that perfidious man, the god of love is triumphant. Yet the change may be due to the curse of Durvasa. Or how could the king, in spite of his promises, neglect so long time to send Shakuntala even a letter ? Well, I must have the ring left her as a token of remembrance brought to him. But which among these austere hermits could I solicit to bring it ? Indeed, even though I knew that no blame attaches to Shakuntala, I could not bring myself to tell father Kanva, just now returned from his pilgrimage, that she is married to Dushyanta, and soon to be a mother. So what am I to do ?

PRIYAMVADA (*entering joyfully*). Hasten, hasten, dear friend, to join in the celebration of Shakuntala's departure to her spouse !

ANASUYA. But what does that mean, dear girl ?

PRIYAMVADA. Now listen. I was just on my way to ask Shakuntala if she had enjoyed a comfortable rest.

ANASUYA. Go on ! Please go on !

PRIYAMVADA. Then I found her, with her head bowed in shame, thus greeted by father Kanva, who, of his own accord, held her in his embrace. "Hail, dear child ! Though the vision of the sacrificer was obscured by smoke, his oblation fell into the center of the fire. I grieve no more in giving you in marriage, my beloved one, than I grieve to impart knowledge to a good disciple. And this very day I will send you under the charge of trusted hermits to your husband."

ANASUYA. But who informed father Kanva of what has happened here ?

PRIYAMVADA. The voice of an invisible spirit, as he entered the sanctuary of the sacred fire, chanted this stanza.

ANASUYA (*amazed*). Let me hear !

PRIYAMVADA (*repeating the stanza*).

As sacred fire dwells in the shami tree,

Within your daughter's bosom, worthy sage,

Dushyanta's glorious seed is hid, to be

A future blessing of this world and age.

ANASUYA (*embracing Priyamvada*). Oh, my friend, how happy I feel ! Yet, when I think that this very day Shakuntala

is to be taken from us, my delight is mingled with sadness.  
PRIYAMVADA. Dear Anasuya, let us quell our sorrow. May our poor friend only be happy.

ANASUYA. For her adornment I have hung on the bough of that mango tree, in a cocoa box, a garland of keshari flowers that will keep their freshness. Take it down, please, for me while I prepare auspicious unguents of consecrated perfumes, holy earth, and darbha sprouts.

PRIYAMVADA. I will do as you ask. (*Exit Anasuya. Priyamvada takes down the flower-box.*)

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Gautami, bid Sharngarava and the others be ready to escort Shakuntala !

PRIYAMVADA (*listening*). Hurry, hurry, Anasuya ! Already the hermits who are to take Shakuntala to Hastinapura are being called.

ANASUYA (*returning with the unguents in her hand*). Come along, my friend, let us go !

PRIYAMVADA (*looking forward*). Ah, there in the glow of the sunrise stands Shakuntala, her locks arranged, and receives the felicitations of the holy women as they approach her with offerings of consecrated rice in their hands, invoking blessings upon her. Let us join them. (*They approach.*)  
(*Shakuntala appears surrounded by Women, as described.*)

FIRST WOMAN (*to Shakuntala*). Dear child, in token of your husband's supreme love for you may you be called "The Great Queen" !

SECOND WOMAN. Dear child, may you be the mother of a hero !

THIRD WOMAN. Dear child, may you be highly honored by your husband !

(*After the blessing all the women save Gautami leave.*)

ANASUYA AND PRIYAMVADA (*approaching*). Beloved friend ! may your arrayment today be attended with a blessing !

SHAKUNTALA. Welcome, my dear friends ! Be seated here.

THE TWO FRIENDS (*taking up the vessels with propitiary offerings. Then sitting down.*) Let us array you now. But first we will rub your limbs with these propitiary unguents.

SHAKUNTALA. I feel very grateful to you. I shall not soon be attired by you again, dear friends. (*Bursts into tears.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS. Oh, my friend, you should not weep on



so happy an occasion. (*They wipe away her tears and begin arranging her.*)

PRIYAMVADA. These simple ornaments of a hermitage do little justice to one deserving the costliest attire.

(*Enter Two Disciples with ornaments in their hands.*)

DISCIPLES. Here are ornaments. With these you may now array the revered lady. (*All look astonished.*)

GAUTAMI. Narada, my sons, where do these come from ?

FIRST DISCIPLE. From the power of father Kanva.

GAUTAMI. Did he produce them by the potency of his pious mind ?

SECOND DISCIPLE. No, indeed. Listen ! Our master commanded us to bring flowers for Shakuntala from the forest trees. And look,

One tree revealed a linen robe,  
White as the moon, a pledge of bliss ;  
Another trickled purple dyes  
With which to stain her lovely feet ;  
And, emulating tender sprouts,  
The hands of sylvan fairies reached  
From others ornaments for her.

PRIYAMVADA (*gazing at Shakuntala*). Hail, Shakuntala, this favor forebodes royal happiness for you in the palace of your spouse. (*Shakuntala blushing with emotion*)

FIRST DISCIPLE. Come, Gautami, come ! Kanva is through with his bath ; let us relate to him this homage of the forest trees.

SECOND DISCIPLE. Yes, let us go. (*Exeunt*)

THE TWO FRIENDS. Unfortunately, we are unused to such ornaments. Yet our knowledge of painting will assist us in arraying you.

SHAKUNTALA. I know your skill. (*They adorn her.*)

(*Enter Kanva returning from his bath.*)

KANVA. Today Shakuntala departs !

This thought with sadness moves my heart.

I check my tears with faltering voice.

My sight is dimmed by anxious care.

If such a hermit's grief, through love,

What must a worldly parent feel

When first dissevered from his child !

(*Approaching Shakuntala.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS. Now, dear Shakuntala, your toilet is completed. Only put on your two linen mantles. (*Shakuntala rises and puts them on.*)

GAUTAMI. Here my child, stands your foster father with eyes overflowing with joy, ready to fold you in his arms. Show him reverence, then.

SHAKUNTALA (*reverently*). Father, I salute you !

KANVA. My daughter,

May you be honored by your spouse,  
As Sharmishtha was by her lord !  
And as she bore him Puru, so  
May you bring forth a royal son !

GAUTAMI. Venerable Kanva, this is more than a blessing—it is a boon.

KANVA. Now, my daughter, come this way at once and make your round about the sacrificial fires. (*They all walk around the altar.*)

KANVA (*utters, in a sacred metre*).

Holy altar fires, gleaming on the hearth,  
Fuel-fed, encompassed by the darbha grass,  
And with sweet oblations cleansing all our guilt,  
Purify my daughter, purify my child !

Now, then, you may set out on your journey. (*Looking aside.*) Where is Sharngarava and the other attendants ?

DISCIPLE (*entering*). Here we are, venerable master.

KANVA. Then show the way to your estimable sister.

SHARNGARAVA. Come this way, honored lady. (*All move forward.*)

KANVA. Hear me, hear me, you trees of the sacred grove !

Unto her lord's abode departs  
Your gentle friend, who could not touch  
The cooling rill till drunk by you.  
Who loved you so she never plucked  
Your blooms, though fond of ornament,  
Whose festive day it ever was  
When your flowers opened in the spring.  
Then bid her tenderly farewell !

(*The voice of a kokila is heard.*)

Now may Shakuntala depart,  
Blessed by these hermit-loving trees,

For this their greeting in return

By the kokila gently voiced.

VOICES (*in the air*). Now a prosperous journey to thee,

Made delightful by many a stream

Where the blossoming lotuses gleam,

And by many a deep-shading tree,

That may soften the sun's burning ray ;

By the dust that the lilies bestow,

When their pollen falls soft on the way,

And the breezes that favoring blow !

(*All listen, amazed.*)

GAUTAMI. My child, the nymphs of the holy grove, loving you as their kindred, bless your journey. Bow to them reverently.

SHAKUNTALA (*reverently bowing and walking on. Aside to Priyamvada*). True, my dear Priyamvada, I long to see my honored lord, and yet my feet are slow to leave this peaceful hermitage.

PRIYAMVADA. You are not alone, beloved friend, to feel the sadness of separation. As it draws near, all the grove evidently shares your feeling.

The browsing deer let the grass fall,

The peacock now dances no more,

The creepers shed upon the ground

Their blighted leaves, like tears of grief.

SHAKUNTALA (*recollecting herself*). Father ! I must say farewell to my tendril sister, the "Light of the Grove."

KANVA. I know your sisterly affection for the jasmine. Here it is, on the right.

SHAKUNTALA (*approaching the jasmine*). You "Light of the Grove," though you are wedded to the mango tree, yet embrace me with your twining arms which you now extend toward me. From this day I must live far from you.

KANVA. As my soul first designed for you,

Your pleasing virtues have acquired

A worthy spouse. This jasmine too

Has joined the mango tree. Henceforth

No anxious care for you, nor her !

Now proceed on your journey.

SHAKUNTALA (*to her two friends*). I must entrust its care to you, my dear friends.

THE TWO FRIENDS. And into what friendly hands do you now commit us ? (*Wiping away their gathering tears.*)

KANVA. Ah, Anasuya, no more crying ! You should instead cheer Shakuntala. (*All proceed.*)

SHAKUNTALA. Dear father, there near the cottage my doe grazes, heavy with the young she carries. When she is a mother you will let me know the pleasing news, will you not ?

KANVA. I will not forget it.

SHAKUNTALA (*feeling herself checked*). But what has fastened to my dress ? (*Turns around.*)

KANVA. Dear daughter :

It is the fawn, your foster child,  
Whom your own hand has gently fed  
With grains of rice ; the fawn whose mouth,  
When stung by Kusha, you once healed  
With soothing oil of Ingudi.

He cannot now forsake your path

SHAKUNTALA. Why, dear little fawn, do you follow me, who am forsaking my friends ? I did indeed nurse you when soon after your birth your mother died ; now, when I am gone, my father will care for you. So follow me no more. (*Moves on, weeping* )

KANVA. Be firm, and wipe away the tears

That cling upon your fringed eye !

They make your steps uncertain here

Upon this rough, uneven path.

SHARNGARAVA. Venerable sire, you know the sacred precept :

“Accompany a friend as far as to the margin of the water.”

We have now reached the border of the lake. Deign to give us your instructions, before you return !

KANVA. Let us first for a moment linger in the shade of that fig tree. (*All proceed there.*)

KANVA (*aside*). What most fitting message may I now send to the mighty Dushyanta ? (*Reflecting.*)

SHAKUNTALA (*aside to Anasuya*). Look, dear friend, the poor flamingo, unable to see her mate where he is hidden behind the lotus leaves, calls in a plaintive note.

ANASUYA. Do not say so, my dear.

Even severed from her love, that bird  
Endures her weary night of grief.

However cruel parting is,  
Yet trusting hope can soothe its pain.

KANVA. Sharngarava, when you have conducted Shakuntala  
before the king, give him my message.

SHARNGARAVA. I await your command.

KANVA. Let this be it :

In virtue of our sacred rank,  
In virtue of your honored race,  
In virtue of the love she gave,  
Unprompted by her friends, to you,  
Receive her with your wedded wives  
And recognize her queenly rank !  
Fate may ordain what else occurs.  
Her Kindreds' office ends with this.

SHARNGARAVA. Your message is received.

KANVA. And now, dear child, a word of advice to you. Even  
though I am a hermit dwelling in a forest, I know something  
of the ways of the world.

SHARNGARAVA. Nothing escapes the wise.

KANVA. When you have become a member of your husband's  
family,

Willingly pay your elders honor ;  
Love your fellow-queens as a friend ;  
Though he offend you never show  
An angered mind before your lord ;  
And check your pride in happy days !  
Acting so, the bride becomes  
A worthy wife ; but otherwise  
A source of discord to her home.

Or what does Gautami say ?

GAUTAMI. An appropriate counsel for a young bride. Treasure  
it up in your heart, my dear one.

KANVA. Now, my beloved child, embrace me and your friends.

SHAKUNTALA. Then, dear father, must even Priyamvada and  
Anasuya leave me here ?

KANVA. Even they, my dear, will in time be given away in  
marriage. It would not be proper for them to follow you.  
Gautami will be your companion.

SHAKUNTALA (*embracing him*). Severed from your side, beloved  
father, like the myrtle-creeper torn from the side of the

Malaya Mountain, how shall I support life in a strange place ?

KANVA. Why do you tremble so, dear child ?

When once within your honored sphere,  
As consort of a mighty lord,  
You evermore will share with him  
The burden of his heavy cares,  
And bear to him a noble son,  
As the east bares the morning ray,  
Then you shall count as nought, my child,  
Your grief at parting from me now.

*(Shakuntala falls at Kanva's feet.)*

KANVA. May all the good I wish you be accomplished !

SHAKUNTALA *(approaching her friends)*. Beloved friends, embrace me, both of you !

THE TWO FRIENDS. Dear Shakuntala, if the king should be slow in recognizing you, show him this ring marked with his name.

SHAKUNTALA. Your misgiving makes me tremble.

THE TWO FRIENDS. Have no fear ! Excessive affection is too prone to imagine evil.

SHARNGARAVA. The sun is high. Come, lady, we must hasten !

SHAKUNTALA. Father ! Father ! When shall I again see this hallowed grove ?

KANVA. Listen :

When you have swayed for many years  
The earth, together with your lord,  
And seen your valiant scion wed,  
And in possession of the realm,  
Then you shall once more with your spouse  
Seek refuge in this peaceful grove.

GAUTAMI. Come, dear child, the best time for journeying passes away. Let your father return . . . But, venerable master, she will still prolong her parting words. So do tear yourself away.

KANVA. Sweet daughter, my religious duties are being neglected.

SHAKUNTALA *(again embracing her father)*. Your frame, dear father, is weakened by penitential exercises. So do not sorrow too much on my account !

KANVA (*sighing*). How could my sorrow be allayed

While I behold, dear child, the grains

Of your oblations in the past

Grow up around your cottage door.

(*Shakuntala with her attendants departs.*)

THE TWO FRIENDS (*gazing after Shakuntala*). Ah, ah ! Now

Shakuntala has disappeared behind the trees of the forest !

KANVA (*with a sigh*). Yes, Anasuya, your companion in the exercise of holy rites is gone. Subdue your grief, both of you, and follow me.

THE TWO FRIENDS. Oh, master, how shall we be able to re-enter the holy grove, which seems lonely without her ?

KANVA. Your love only makes it appear so. (*Walking pensively on.*) Now that I have dismissed Shakuntala to her husband's home, calm is again restored to my mind. Indeed,

We rear our maids for others' weal :

And having sent her to her lord,

My soul again as tranquil feels

As if I had restored a trust.

## ACT FIFTH

*Scene—A room in Dushyanta's Palace. The King and the Jester seated.*

JESTER (*listening*). Listen, my honored friend ! Just turn your attention to the music room. You can hear the harmonies of a beautiful song. Oh ! I understand. It is the honored Hansapadika practicing a lovely melody.

KING. Hush, then ! I will listen.

(*Song behind the scenes.*)

Ah, roving bee, can you forget

In eager search of honey yet,

That you have kissed the mango bell

And happy with the lotus dwell ?

KING. A rapturous song, indeed !

JESTER. Do you understand the meaning of the words ?

KING (*smiling*). I once favored her, and now she censures me

on account of the queen Vasumati. Go and tell Hansapadika from me, my dear fellow, that I accept her delicate censure.

JESTER. At your command ! (*Rising from his seat.*) Yet, my friend, if she should dispatch someone to grasp me by the forelock and give me a drubbing, there would be no more help for me than for the continent hermit tempted by a charming nymph.

KING. Go ! Soothe her with winning words.

JESTER. What am I to do but to obey ?

KING (*aside*). How can it be that this song has stirred in me a deep melancholy, as though I were separated from some beloved being ?

When in the midst of happy hours  
A fervent longing fills our heart,  
As we behold enchanting forms,  
Or hear delightful music sound, ^  
It is then our soul with vague,  
But lingering, love remembers yet  
The affections of a former life.

(*Enter a Chamberlain.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. Ah for my condition !

This wand, a symbol I once took  
As warden of the female court.  
How years have sped !—It serves me now  
But to support my tottering step !

Now what am I to do ? Truly, a king cannot afford to neglect his duty. Yet it would hardly be right, now that he has just left the judgment seat, to disturb him by announcing the arrival of these hermits from Kanva. And still, his royal duties allow no repose.

The sun unceasing drives his steeds,  
The wind moves onward night and day,  
And Shesha ever bears the earth ;  
Just so the tithe-paid king must act.

I will therefore deliver my message. (*Walking and looking about.*) Ah, there is the king !

He has bestowed a generous care  
Upon his subject-children now,  
And seeks repose, with weary mind,  
Just as a mighty elephant



Seeks cooling shade, when he has led  
His flocks to graze in noonday heat.

(*Approaching.*)

Victory, victory to the king ! Some hermits dwelling in the forest near the Snowy Mountains have arrived here in company with some women. They bring you a message from holy Kanva. So please Your Majesty, I await your commands.

KING (*respectfully*). A message from the holy Kanva, did you say ?

CHAMBERLAIN. Exactly so.

KING. Then tell my household priest Somarata from me to give these hermits a friendly reception, as required by sacred precepts. He may then introduce them into my presence. I will await them in a place suitable for the reception of pious hermits.

CHAMBERLAIN. Your Majesty shall be obeyed. (*Exit.*)

KING (*rising. To the Warder*). Vetravati, lead the way to the chamber of the sacred fire.

WARDER. This way, sire.

KING (*walks on, distracted by cares*). Other mortals are happy when they have attained the aim of their desires ; but to a king that attainment only brings further cares.

To reach a lofty station soothes  
Our eager yearning ; yet the care  
Of guarding what was won is pain.  
So, like a parasol that's held  
By your own hand, is royal might ;  
It soothes, but it fatigues as well.

TWO HERLADS (*behind the scenes*). May the king be victorious !

FIRST HERALD. You toil for your own people still,  
Forgetful of your own repose.

Such is your part ; the lofty tree  
Takes on its head the burning heat,  
While it allays with cooling shades  
The weary wanderer's fevered brow.

SECOND HERALD. With wielded rod you still restrain

The evil-doer, calm the strife,  
And guard your land with potency.  
May eager kinsmen gather them

Where wealth abounds ; a nation hails  
A true and kindred friend in you !

KING. Though weary before, I now feel relieved. (*Continues walking.*)

WARDER. Now the terrace of the sanctuary of fire is purified and looks beautiful ; and the cow that yields milk for the oblation stands near by. Please ascend, sire.

KING (*ascends, leaning on the shoulder of his attendant*).

Vetravati, on what errand may Kanva have sent these hermits to me ?

Has the devotion of those men  
Of hoarded penitence been checked ?  
Has someone harmed the herding deer  
That graze within the sacred grove ?  
Or have the blossoms of its shrubs  
Been blighted through some sin of mine ?  
So asks, perplexed, my troubled soul.

WARDER. I incline to believe that these holy men, delighting in good deeds, have come to pay homage to Your Majesty. (*Enter the Hermits, with Gautami leading Shakuntala. They are preceded by the Chamberlain and the Domestic Priest.*)

CHAMBERLAIN. This way, venerable sirs, this way ?

SHARNGARAVA. O Sharadvata,

This mighty king of men, indeed,  
Swerves not from noble rectitude,  
And not a class within his realm,  
Not even the lowest, wanders wrong,  
And yet my soul, always injured  
To tranquil calm, looks on this throng  
As on a house involved in flames.

SHARADVATA. It is natural that you should feel so on entering this palace. I share your feeling

I look upon these pleasure thralls,  
As one who has performed his bath  
On the polluted, as the pure  
On the impure, as thrift on sleep,  
And as the freeman on the slave.

SHAKUNTALA (*feeling a tremor of the right eyelid*). Ah, what is the meaning of this tremor of my right eyelid ?

GAUTAMI. Heaven avert the evil omen, my child ! The guar-

dian deities of the husband's home grant you blessing !  
(*Walks on.*)

PRIEST (*pointing to the king*). Look, you hermits, there stands the noble protector of the castes and Brahmanic orders. He has just left the judgement seat, and is ready to receive you. Behold him !

SHARNGARAVA. Great Brahman, that is certainly worthy of praise, and we see in it only an expression of benevolence without any desert of our own.

The tree bends humbly with its load  
Of growing fruit ; the dew-filled cloud  
Sinks lowly down ; the noble man  
Is not exalted by his wealth.  
The very nature of those men  
Who practice kindness to all !

WARDER. So please Your Majesty, from the serene countenances of these holy men I infer that their errand is of a pleasing nature.

KING (*looking at Shakuntala*). But the lady there :  
Who may she be whose lovely form  
Is half concealed beneath her veil ?  
Among those hermits she is like  
A tender bud in yellow leaves.

WARDER. So please your Majesty, I conjecture in vain, half concealed as she is. But, surely, her appearance is admirable.

KING. True, but it is not proper to gaze at the wife of another.

SHAKUNTALA (*pressing her hand on her bosom. Aside*). Oh, my heart, why this fluttering ? Remember the love of your lord, and be firm !

PRIEST (*advancing*). These hermits have been received with all due honor. They bring a message from their master. May it please Your Majesty to receive it ?

KING. I am ready.

HERMITS (*raising their hands*). Victory to Your Majesty !

KING. I greet you all.

HERMITS. May all your desires be fulfilled !

KING. I trust the devotions of your hermitage are undisturbed.

HERMITS. Who could disturb the holy rites  
Of pious men where you hold sway ?  
Could night prevail where the sun shines ?

KING. Not in vain should I be called a "ruler." I trust the holy Kanva is prospering for the welfare of the world?

HERMITS. Holy men have prosperity in their own power. He bids us inquire about the welfare of Your Majesty, and deliver this message.

KING. What are the commands of your venerable master?

SHARNGARAVA. He bids us tell you that he joyfully gives his sanction to the marriage Your Majesty has contracted by mutual agreement with this lady, his daughter. Because  
We hold you chief of noble men,  
And her incarnate purity.  
So Brahma, joining like to like,  
Is free from censure now at last.

Since she will soon be the mother of your child, receive her now for the joint performance of holy rites.

GAUTAMI. Noble prince, I also have something to say. But this is not the occasion for me to speak.

She took no counsel with her kin,  
Nor did you ask advice of yours.  
In secret nuptials you were joined.  
Then speak to one another now!

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Ah, what will be the answer of my worthy lord?

KING. What does this proposal mean?

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Ah, his words are fire to me.

SHARNGARAVA. What does this mean! A person like Your Majesty certainly knows well the ways of the world.

The world suspects, however pure,  
A wife dwelling with her family.  
Hence should a bride stay with her lord,  
Even though he love her not, they say.

KING. Do you mean to say that I have wedded this noble woman?

SHAKUNTALA (*disconsolate aside*). Oh, my heart, your misgiving was well grounded.

SHARNGARAVA. Is it becoming in a king to defy justice because he regrets what he has done?

KING. Why this question, which is based on a falsehood?

SHARNGARAVA. Such inconsistency is common only in men intoxicated with power.

KING. Then am I the aim of your nice discrimination ?

GAUTAMI. Do not be ashamed for a moment, my daughter.

I will remove your veil, and then your lord will recognize you. (*Removes the veil.*)

KING (*gazing at Shakuntala. Aside.*)

Uncertain whether I have wed  
Or not, that form of spotless charm,  
I cannot taste, nor yet forsake,  
Her sweetness, like the bee that flies  
Around the dewy bud at dawn.

(*Remains rapt in meditation.*)

WARDER. See our lord's regard for righteousness ! Who else would have hesitated were such a beauteous being brought him by good fortune for acceptance ?

SHARNGARAVA. Oh, king, why so silent ?

KING. Listen, holy men. However much I ponder, truly, I cannot remember having married that noble woman. And not believing myself her husband, how could I receive her now that she evidently is soon to become a mother ?

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Ah, even our marriage is called in question by my lord Where are now my high expectations of bliss ?

SHARNGARAVA (*to the king*). Do not speak so !

Should you abuse the saint who once  
Forgave his child, seduced by you,  
And, yielding you his stolen gem,  
Did exculpate the robbers' deed ?

SHARADVATA. Sharngarava, say nothing more. Shakuntala, we have said all we had to say. And the king has replied. Now bring him conclusive evidence !

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). If his love for me is so changed, what good would it do to try to remind him ? I am in a pitiful state, that is certain. (*Aloud.*) My honored lord . . . (*Stops short.*) But no, I must not address you so, since you have denied our marriage. Mighty descendent of Puru, it is not right in you to repudiate with such harsh words an innocent-minded girl whom you won in the hermitage by solemn vow.

KING (*impatiently refusing to listen*). Peace ! Your words are a sin !

Why strive to taint my royal name

And bring destruction, like a flood  
That breaks the banks, hurls down their trees,  
Fouls the clear stream with turbid waves.

SHAKUNTALA. If indeed, such is your conduct because you really suspect me to be the wife of another, I will remove your suspicion by this token.

KING. A happy thought !

SHAKUNTALA (*feeling for the signet ring*). Oh ! Oh ! I have lost the ring from my finger ! (*Looks in anguish at Gautami.*)

GAUTAMI. Surely, the ring must have slipped off when you were offering homiage to the water of Shachi's sacred lake near Shakravatara.

KING (*smiling*). Indeed, the saying comes true : "Womankind, and ready mind."

SHAKUNTALA. No, say instead : "destiny is mighty." But I will remind you of another circumstance.

KING. Well, let me hear it.

SHAKUNTALA. Do you not remember how one day in the jasmine bower you poured into the hollow of your hand the water that had gathered in the cup of a lotus flower ?

KING. I am listening. Proceed !

SHAKUNTALA. Just then my little fawn, my fosterling, whom I used to call "my long-eyed pet," came toward us. And you said : "Drink first, gentle fawn !" and coaxed her with the water. But she dared not approach the hand of a stranger. And then I poured some water into my own hand, and she drank it confidently. And you said, with a smile : "Everyone trusts his like and are not you two sisters in this grove ?"

KING. It is by honeyed falsehoods like these that worldings are allured by designing women !

GAUTAMI. Your insinuations are unworthy, mighty prince ! This woman was reared in a hermitage and knows of no deceit.

KING. Holy matron,

The cuckoo, when she wings her flight,  
Commits her brood to other nests.

What must a woman's cunning be  
When even brutes show native wile !

SHAKUNTALA (*indignant*). Ignoble man, you judge others

after your own heart ! Who, indeed, would act like you ?  
Putting on a garb of righteousness, you are an abyss covered  
with flowers !

KING (*aside*). Her unfeigned indignation makes my heart  
hesitate. For,

When I with deeply angered soul  
Denied her tale of secret love,  
Indignant then, with flaming eyes,  
Dissevering their arching brows,  
She seemed like snapping Smara's bow.

(*aloud*.) Good lady, Dushyanta's character is well known.  
I do not understand your meaning.

SHAKUNTALA. Well do I deserve to be called a wanton, because,  
confiding in the honor of Puru's race, I gave myself to a man  
with honey on his lips, but poison in his heart. (*Hides her  
face with her mantle, and bursts into tears.*)

SHARNGARAVA. So it is that a hasty and unregarded action,  
freely committed, leads to burning remorse.

Marriage bonds should be tied with heed,  
And bonds in secret most of all.  
Where one knows not the other's heart  
Fond love turns often into hate.

KING. What now ! Do you believe this woman rather than  
me, since you overwhelm me with reproachful charges ?

SHARNGARAVA (*scornfully*). Well you seem to know the para-  
dox :

Trust not the simple words of those  
Who from their birth have learned no guile,  
But do believe the words of those  
Who make a science of deceit.

KING. Most honest Brahman, granting that you are in the  
right, what would I gain by betraying this woman ?

SHARNGARAVA. Perdition !

KING. But no one will believe that a scion of Puru would  
seek his own destruction.

SHARADVATA. Why waste your words, Sharngarava ? Our  
master's commission is performed. So let us return !

(*To the king.*) She is your bride ! Receive her, you,  
Or cast her off ; for absolute  
Is the husband's power over his wife.

Gautami, lead the way out ! (*They move away.*)

SHAKUNTALA. What ! Will you, now that I am betrayed by this faithless nian, also forsake me in my anguish ?

GAUTAMI (*stopping*). My son Sharngarava, look, Shakuntala is following us, lamenting bitterly. What will my child do here with a husband who rejects her so cruelly ?

SHARNGARAVA (*turning sternly toward Shakuntala.*) Willful child ! Do you seek to be independent of your duty ? (*Shakuntala trembles with fear.*) Shakuntala !

If you are such as the king claims,  
How can your father take you back  
An outcast of your family ?  
But if you are pure in heart and deed,  
Then you may easily endure  
Even bondage in your husband's home.

Remain ! As for us, we must return.

KING. O Hermit, why delude this woman so ?

The moon awakes with gentle rays  
The lotus of the night alone ;  
The sun the lotus of the day.  
Just so a man of virtuous mind  
Will shun to clasp another's wife.

SHARNGARAVA. Where is your fear of guilt, who forget an earlier vow for some new fancy ?

KING (*turning to his house priest*). Tell me, revered Brahman, which of the two is the greater or less sin ?

Uncertain whether here my own  
Remembrance or her words be false,  
Shall I repudiate my bride,  
Or, sinning, clasp another's wife ?

PRIEST (*deliberating*). You might act in this manner.

KING. Instruct me, revered Brahman.

PRIEST. Let this lady dwell in my house until her child is born. If you ask me why, I will tell you. Soothsayers have once told you that your firstborn will be a sovereign of the earth. Now if the hermit's daughter bears a son with the mark of empire in his hand, then you must joyfully receive her as your consort. But if the sign is wanting, then send her back to her father.

KING. I will yield to your advice.



PRIEST. Follow me, my child !

SHAKUNTALA. Holy earth, receive me into your bosom !  
*(Shakuntala, weeping, follows the priest and the hermits.  
 The king, his mind still clouded by the curse, remains absorbed  
 in thinking of Shakuntala.)*

VOICE *(behind the scenes)*. A miracle !

KING *(listening)*. What may this mean ?

PRIEST *(entering, confused)*. O king, a miracle, indeed, has occurred !

KING. What miracle ?

PRIEST. Great king, as soon as Kanva's hermits had departed,  
 That tender woman wailed her fate  
 With lifted arms and flowing tears . . .

KING. And then ?

PRIEST. A shining apparition then  
 In female form, descending, bore  
 Her from the Fairies' Pool aloft !

KING. Venerable priest, I have from the first disowned this matter. Why seek an explanation by vain conjecture ?

PRIEST *(looking at the king)*. Victory to the king ! *(Exit.)*

KING. Vetravati, I am weary. Lead the way to the bedchamber.

WARDER. This way, sire. *(They move away.)*

KING. Though I do not recall that ever  
 I wed the saint's rejected child,  
 Yet in my deeply troubled soul  
 I hear a voice : "She spoke the truth !"

## PRELUDE TO ACT SIXTH

*Scene—Street in Dushyanta's City. Enter the King's Brother-in-Law as Chief of the Police, and with him Two Constables leading a poor Fisherman, whose hands are tied behind his back.*

CONSTABLES *(striking the prisoner)*. There, rascal ! And now confess where you came across that ring with the king's own signet.

FISHERMAN (*with signs of terror*). Mercy, kind sirs ! I did not steal it, indeed not !

FIRST CONSTABLE. Of course not. The king took you to be a pious Brahman, I suppose, and gave it to you.

FISHERMAN. Only listen ! I am a poor fisherman, living near Shakravatara.

SECOND CONSTABLE. Did we ask you about your home, villain ?

CHIEF. Now, Suchaka, let him tell his own story from the beginning, and don't interrupt him !

CONSTABLES. As your honor commands. Let us have your tale, then.

FISHERMAN. I gain the support of my family with nets and hooks and other fishing tools.

CHIEF (*ironically*). A nice occupation, indeed, killing animals !

FISHERMAN. Master, do not say so.

No man must leave his father's trade,  
Even though despised—so the law wills.  
The sacrificer also kills,  
And yet may have a tender heart.

CHIEF. Go on ! go on !

FISHERMAN. One day, as I was cutting open a carp, I found this ring with the sparkling jewel in the maw of the fish. And when, later, I offered the ring for sale I was seized by these good gentlemen. You may kill me or let me go, but I have told you truthfully how I found the ring.

CHIEF (*to the second constable*). I tell you, Januka, that knave smells of raw fish so badly that there can be no doubt of his being a fisherman. But yet we must make some further inquiries about the way he found that ring. Let us take him before the king's household.

CONSTABLES. Very well. March on, outpaise ! (*Ali move on.*)

CHIEF. You, Suchaka, remain here at the gate and keep close watch of him. I will lay the whole story of the recovery of this ring before the king, and I will soon be back.

CONSTABLES. Yes, enter, master, and may your errand be favorably received. (*The chief enters the palace.*)

FIRST CONSTABLE (*after a while*). I say, Januka, the chief makes a pretty long stay.

SECOND CONSTABLE. Well, you have to creep slow when you want to see the king.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Do you know, Januka, my fingers fairly itch to fix the funeral flowers on that victim. (*Pointing at the prisoner.*)

FISHERMAN. Why should you wish an innocent man to die ?

SECOND CONSTABLE. There comes our master with a paper in his hand. That must be the king's command. (*To the fisherman.*) Now prepare to become food for the vultures or to face some hungry dog.

CHIEF. (*returning*). Ho, Suchaka, set the fisherman free ! He has told us a true story about the ring.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Oh, very good, sir !

SECOND CONSTABLE. The wretch had already one foot in hell, and here he is all safe again.

FISHERMAN (*bowing to the chief*). Well, master, what do you think now of my way of getting a living ?

CHIEF. The king presents you with this purse, the full value of the ring. (*Gives him the money.*)

FISHERMAN (*taking it with a bow*). I am greatly favored by His Majesty.

FIRST CONSTABLE. He may, indeed, speak of favor who is taken from the gallows to be seated on an elephant.

SECOND CONSTABLE. This present shows that the king must value the ring very highly.

CHIEF. I don't think he prizes it so highly on account of the precious jewel as because it reminds him of someone he loves. The moment he received it he seemed to be deeply agitated, though he usually well knows how to control his feelings.

FIRST CONSTABLE. Then, master, you have done a great service.

SECOND CONSTABLE. "To this fisher prince." say. (*Looks enviously at the fisherman.*)

FISHERMAN. Ah, half belongs to you, good masters, to buy that flower you were to favor me with.

SECOND CONSTABLE. Well, now, that's good.

CHIEF. My honest fisherman, I have quite a liking for you. Let us seal our new friendship over a cup of Kadamba wine.

Come, let's go to the wine shop !

ALL. Yes, let's go ! (*Exeunt.*)

## ACT SIXTH

*Scene—The garden of the Palace. The nymph Sanumati descends in a celestial car.*

SANUMATI. I have, then, in my turn, performed the regular watch at the Fairies' Pool. While the other nymphs are performing their ablutions I will ascertain with my own eyes how it fares with the sainted king. My friendship with Menaka has made her daughter Shakuntala as dear to me as if she were of my own flesh and blood. And Menaka has sent me on this errand for her daughter's sake. (*Looking around.*) What does it mean that I see no preparations in the king's palace for the Vernal Festival? To be sure, I could divine the reason by the inspiration of profound thought, but the wishes of my friend are sacred. Well, then, I will make myself invisible and hold myself near these two maidens who are tending the flowers, and watch. (*Enter a Maiden who stops, gazing at a mango bud. Another Maiden follows her.*)

FIRST MAIDEN. You green and purpled mango bud,  
You essence of this vernal life,  
I see and hail you, full of joy,  
Auspicious harbinger of spring!

SECOND MAIDEN. Little "kokila bird," what are you warbling there?

FIRST MAIDEN. Dear little "honeybee," don't you know that the Kokila bird is enraptured at the sight of a mango bud?

SECOND MAIDEN (*joyfully approaching*). What! Has the honey-month really come?

FIRST MAIDEN. Yes, indeed, my "honeybee," and with it the lovely season of joy and song and love.

SECOND MAIDEN. Lend me your support, dear, while I stand on tiptoe and pluck that mango bud, of which I will make an offering to the god of love.

FIRST MAIDEN. Yes, provided you will give me half the reward bestowed by the god.

SECOND MAIDEN. Certainly! and granted without asking. Are we not one in soul, though two in body? (*Leans on her*

*friend and plucks the mango bud.*) Ah, here is a bud not yet expanded. How sweet-smelling on its broken stem ! (*Joining her hands reverently.*)

Oh, mango bud, I offer you  
To Kama, grasping now his bow.  
Be you his choicest dart, your mark  
Some maid whose lover wanders far.

(*She throws down the bud.*)

CHAMBERLAIN (*suddenly entering in anger*). Hold there, thoughtless girl ! How dare you pluck those mango blossoms when the king has forbidden the celebration of this Vernal Festival?

BOTH MAIDENS (*frightened*). Pardon us, honored sir, we were not aware of it.

CHAMBERLAIN. Why, you were not aware of it ! Even the vernal shrubs and the birds that dwell among them obey the commands of the king

The mango buds, though bursting forth  
Long since, form no more pollen dust ,  
The amaranth, though ripe to bloom,  
Remains confined within its bud ;  
The cuckoo quells his charming notes,  
Though winter's chilly dews have passed ;  
Yes, even Love witholds, dismayed,  
His shaft, half from its quiver drawn.

BOTH MAIDENS. We doubt not. Great is the power of the sainted king !

FIRST MAIDEN. It is only a few days since the king's brother-in-law, Mitravasu, sent us to serve His Majesty and attend to his garden. Our recent arrival may explain why we have not heard of his command.

CHAMBERLAIN. I accept your excuse, only don't commit this fault again !

BOTH MAIDENS. But, noble sir, if we may know, tell us why the king has forbidden the celebration of this Vernal Feast. We are curious to know

SANUMATI (*aside*). Mortals are usually fond of festivals. There must be some weighty reason for this prohibition.

CHAMBERLAIN. Why should I hesitate to tell what is already on the lips of many ? Has not the gossip about the king's repudiation of Shakuntala reached your ears ?

BOTH MAIDENS. Yes, we have it all from the king's brother-in-law, up to the discovery of the ring.

CHAMBERLAIN. Then there is little more to tell. As soon as the king saw his own ring, he remembered and exclaimed : "Ah, it was all true ! I was secretly wedded to Shakuntala. I disowned her because I had lost my recollection !" And ever since that moment the king has been plunged into a burning agony.

He loathes all pleasures, sees no more  
How bowing courtiers round him throng,  
And tosses sleepless on his couch  
Through all the long and weary night.  
And when he greets with civil words,  
As due, the ladies of his court,  
He stumbles, dreaming, on their names,  
And then feels long abashed with shame.

SANUMATI (*aside*). I rejoice to hear it.

CHAMBERLAIN. It is on account of this mental trouble of the king that the festival has been prohibited.

BOTH MAIDENS. That is proper.

A VOICE (*behind the scenes*). This way, sire, this way !

CHAMBERLAIN (*listening*). Ah, the king is approaching ! Now, maidens, attend to your duties.

BOTH MAIDENS. We will, sir. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter King Dushyanta, dressed in mourning, attended by his jester and Warder.*)

CHAMBERLAIN (*looking at the king*). Ah, a noble form will remain beautiful under all trials ! Even in his deep sorrow the king is magnificent.

Disdaining brilliant shows, he wears  
One golden bracelet on his arm.  
His lips are blanched by bitter sobs,  
His eyes inflamed by sleepless care.  
His frame is thinner and yet it shines  
With innate splendor, like the gem  
Ground brighter by the polish stone.

SANUMATI (*gazing at the king. Aside*). I can, indeed, well conceive how Shakuntala should pine after such a man, even though he has disowned and abused her.

KING (*walking slowly up and down, absorbed in thought*).

This palsied heart did slumber once,  
 In vain roused by my fawn-like love.  
 But now, alas, it's wide-awake  
 To bitter torments of remorse !

SANUMATI (*aside*). My poor Shakuntala endures the same sufferings.

JESTER. There he is again suffering with his Shakuntala fever.  
 How he may be healed, I am sure I don't know.

CHAMBERLAIN (*approaching*). Victory, victory to the king !  
 Great prince, the grounds of the pleasure grove have been  
 put in order. Your Majesty may now at your pleasure  
 enjoy rest in your favorite resorts.

KING (*to the Warder*). Vetravati, tell my minister, the worthy  
 Pishuna, from me, that I am too weary to-day to sit upon  
 the judgment seat. Ask him to make a written report of  
 the cases he attends to, and send it to me.

WARDER. Your Majesty's commands shall be obeyed. (*Exit.*)

KING (*to the Chamberlain*). And you, Vatayana, attend to  
 your duties.

CHAMBERLAIN. I obey, sire. (*Exit.*)

JESTER. Finally you are free from bores. Now come and have  
 a rest in your garden, and enjoy its refreshing coolness.

KING. Ah, my friend, it is an ever-true saying that "affliction  
 will enter through any cranny."

The cloud that from my memory hid  
 The hermit's child is scarce dissolved,  
 When Kama fixes on his bow  
 A mango blossom for a dart,  
 And aims his arrow at my heart.

JESTER. Only wait a moment, I will soon disarm Master Kama  
 with my cane. (*Raises his stick to strike off a mango blossom.*)

KING (*smiling*). Enough, my friend ! I know the mighty power  
 of a Brahman. But now tell me, where shall I sit to feast my  
 eye with the sight of the twining plants so like my beloved ?

JESTER. Did you not tell your attendant, Chaturika, that you  
 were to pass a while in the jasmine bower, and to bring you  
 the palette with the portrait of the lovely Shakuntala,  
 sketched by your own hand ?

KING. True. That would, indeed, be a diversion to my heart.  
 Lead the way there.

JESTER. This way, sire. (*Both move on, followed by Sanumati.*)  
 Here is the bower with its marble seat. It greets us welcome  
 with an offering of lovely flowers. Then enter and be seated !  
 (*Both enter and sit down.*)

SANUMATI (*aside*). I will hide behind this creeper, and look  
 at my friend's portrait. And I will afterward tell her of  
 her husband's many expressions of love. (*Hides herself.*)

KING. Dear friend, how well I now remember what once  
 transpired between Shakuntala and myself. And I told  
 it all to you. To be sure, you were not present when I  
 rejected my bride, but why did you never before breathe  
 her name to me ? Was your recollection darkened like my  
 own ?

JESTER. By no means I had not forgotten But do you not  
 remember that, having told me all, you at last assured me  
 that you had only been jesting, and that you were not really  
 in love ? And I was lump-headed enough to take your  
 words for it. But there, you see, Fate is mighty.

SANUMATI (*aside*). That is true.

KING (*meditating*). Dear friend, you must help me !

JESTER. What now, my friend ? Such weakness is unworthy  
 of you. True men never yield to grief. Do not mountains  
 stand unshaken in the raging storm ?

KING. Oh, my friend, when I call to mind the deep anguish  
 of my Shakuntala when she stood there rejected and over-  
 come with fear, I feel disconsolate.

When, spurned by me, she sought to leave  
 With her companion, and at once  
 The saint's disciple, stern as he,  
 Bade her remain with mighty voice,  
 She cast on me, so cruel, yet  
 One glance, bedimmed with gushing tears,  
 Which burns me like a poisoned dart.

SANUMATI (*aside*). Ah, such is the result of his own act. I  
 am not sorry for his anguish.

JESTER. Listen, an idea strikes me. Perhaps some celestial  
 being has carried her off.

KING. Who else could presume to touch my bride, my heart's  
 idol ? I have been told that the celestial nymph Menaka  
 is her mother. And my soul harbors a presentiment that



some of her companions may have carried off my love.  
 SANUMATI (*aside*). His present recollection surprises me less than his former oblivion.

JESTER. If that is so you will surely meet her before long.

KING. Why so ?

JESTER. Be sure no parent can endure to see a daughter suffer through separation from her husband.

KING. Oh, my friend,

Was it a dream, a magic spell,  
 A dark delusion, or the blight  
 Of some good deeds, rewarded once ?  
 I do not know ; it's passed forever,  
 A deep and dark abyss, in which  
 My heart's most precious hopes were plunged.

JESTER. Do not speak so ! Is not that very ring a witness that what has been lost may be unexpectedly found again, when Fate so wills it ?

KING. (*gazing at the ring*). Ah, this ring has fallen from a station which it will not easily regain, and deserves pity.

Your own deserts, in truth, oh ring,  
 Are clearly slighted like my own,  
 Since you have fallen from my love's  
 Fair, roseate finger, once your place.

SANUMATI (*aside*). Had it found its way to the hand of any other person it would truly be worthy of pity.

JESTER. Tell me, please, how that signet ring ever came to be fixed on Shakuntala's hand ?

SANUMATI (*aside*). I am also curious to know.

KING. Listen. When I was about to return from the hermitage to my capital, my beloved said to me with tears in her eyes, "How long will it be before my lord receives me as his queen ?"

JESTER. And your reply ?

KING. I then placed the signet ring on her finger, saying :

Count on this ring, until the last,  
 One letter of my name each day :  
 Then my messenger shall come  
 And bring you to my palace, love.

But in my strange oblivion I cruelly neglected to fulfil my promise.

SANUMATI (*aside*). Fate ordained that the appointment for that happy meeting should not be kept.

JESTER. But how did the ring ever pass into the maw of that carp which the fisherman cut open ?

KING. It slipped from my darling's finger into the stream of the Ganges as she was offering homage to the water of Shachi's pool.

JESTER. I see.

SANUMATI (*aside*). So this should be the reason why the sainted king, who abhors injustice, came to doubt his marriage with my poor Shakuntala. But does a love like his need any token of recognition ? How am I to explain that ?

KING. Then I must upbraid this ring.

JESTER (*aside*). Truly, he begins to act like a madman.

KING. How could you slip into the wave

From that fair hand of graceful shape ?

And yet what right have I to scold ?

A lifeless thing could well be blind

Where I rejected her I loved.

JESTER. All very touching ! But here I am devoured by hunger.

KING. Oh, my unjustly rejected love ! take pity on one whose heart is burning with repentance, and return to my sight !  
(*Enter Chaturika hurriedly with a picture in her hand.*)

CHATURIKA. Here is the queen's portrait. (*Shows the picture.*)

JESTER. Splendid, my friend ! A sweet sentiment delightfully pervades the whole. And all the forms so natural that they are truly delusive !

SANUMATI (*apart*). Indeed, this sainted king is a real artist. I think I see the dear Shakuntala herself before me.

KING. Whatever lacks perfection's mark

In this her portrait is not true ;

And yet it may not all be false

To her enchanting loveliness.

SANUMATI (*aside*). Such words bear witness of a love intensified by remorse, and of modesty as well.

JESTER. But, my friend, I see three ladies on the canvas, and all charming. Which of the three is the noble Shakuntala ?

SANUMATI (*aside*). He must be blind if he cannot distinguish her beauty from that of the others.

KING. Which one would you take for Shakuntala ?

JESTER. Well, I presume that is Shakuntala, who is leaning, apparently tired, against that mango tree whose shoots glisten as if just watered : she, extending her arms gracefully, with drops of perspiration on her face and the flowers of her unfastened locks at her feet. And I suppose the other two are her friends.

KING. You surmise rightly. Observe a mark of my passion on this very picture.

My moistened hand has soiled its edge,  
My tear has dimmed her glowing cheek.

(*To Chaturika.*) Chaturika, the pleasure ground is only half painted. Go, fetch the brush that I may complete it.

CHATURIKA. Worthy Mathavya, kindly hold the picture while I am gone.

KING. No, let me take it. (*Takes the picture from Chaturika, who leaves.*) For

If once, Oh friend, I spurned my love,  
I like to gaze with fondness now  
Upon her image constantly,  
Like one who, having passed a stream  
That flowed profusely on his path,  
Thirsts for the vapors of the air.

JESTER (*aside*). Surely, like a madman he has forsaken the reality for a mere shadow. (*Aloud.*) Now tell me what remains to be painted.

SANUMATI (*aside*). He will paint, no doubt, every spot that was dear to my friend.

KING. I will tell you :

The River Malini remains,  
With two flamingoes on its bank ;  
And, round about, the sacred hills  
Near the Himalayas, with deer  
Reclining on the slopes ; and last,  
Beneath a tree with garments hung,  
A doe that gently rubs her head  
Against the horn of a gazelle.

JESTER (*aside*). If I were in his place I would fill out the picture with a crowd of those old, long-bearded hermits.

KING. Here, my dear Mathavya, I have forgotten one of

Shakuntala's ornaments, which I had intended to draw.

JESTER. What is that ?

SANUMATI (*aside*). Something suitable to a fair maiden dwelling in the forest, no doubt.

KING. There yet remains, my friend, to paint  
A sweet shirisha blossom, twined  
Behind the ear, with graceful threads  
Depending on her velvet cheek ;  
And on her breast a neckalce wrought  
Of lotus fibers, soft as are  
The rays of the autumnal moon.

JESTER. But please, why does that noble lady, as if frightened, cover her lips with her right hand as delicate as the bud of a water-lily ? (*Looking closer.*) Ah, I see ; that bee, the rogue, that honey-thief, is flying against her face.

KING (*wandering*). Ah, drive off that bold insect !

JESTER. It belongs to you to repress offenders. Now check this one.

KING. True ! Rascally flower-hunter, why trouble yourself to hover about Shakuntala ?

On yonder blossom your fond mate,  
Though thirsting, waits alone for you  
To sip the nectar of its juice.

SANUMATI (*aside*). A polite way of warning it off, surely !

JESTER. Drive it off ! You will find the persistent creature there again.

KING. What ! Disobey my command ! Now just listen, roving bee :

Touch not my darling's purple lip,  
Sweet as the bud of some young tree.  
That lip whose nectar I have drunk  
In feasts of love, or I will sure  
Shut you within your lotus cup !

JESTER. How could it help being awed by such a terrible threat ? (*Smiling ; aside.*) He's gone stark mad, that's clear ! And by keeping him company I am beginning to talk about as wildly. (*Aloud.*) But don't you see that is only a picture ?

KING. What a picture !

SANUMATI (*aside*). Even I did not discover it : how much less should he ?

KING. Oh, my friend, how cruel in you to wake me so.

Looking at her before my eyes,  
My soul was rapturous with bliss ;  
But yet you rob me of my dream.  
My bride's a picture once again.

*(Wipes away a tear.)*

SANUMATI *(aside)*. He is certainly very impatient in his separation from his beloved.

KING. Ah, my friend, how I am pursued by sorrow !

Forever wakeful on my couch,  
I cannot meet her in my dream ;  
And when I see her pictured form,  
My glance is dimmed with gathering tears.

SANUMATI *(aside)*. You have certainly atoned for your wrong of repudiating Shakuntala.

CHATURIKA *(re-entering)*. Victory to the king ! I was coming along with the box of colors, when . .

KING. When what ?

CHATURIKA. When I met the queen Vasumati with her attendant, and she tore it out of my hand and said she would herself bring it to your Majesty.

JESTER. Thank Heaven you escaped !

CHATURIKA. Her mantle was caught by a twig, and while her attendant was disentangling it I ran away.

KING. Here, my friend, take this picture and hide it. The queen will be here in a minute, and my attentions have made her arrogant.

JESTER. Hide the picture ! Hide yourself, rather ! *(Rises and takes the picture.)* When you have swallowed the bane she brings you from the ladies' apartments send for me again at the watch tower, where I will betake myself. *(Hurries away.)*

SANUMATI *(aside)*. Then he respects his former engagements, although he has given his heart to another. I fear his affection is fickle.

WARDER *(entering with a document)*. Victory to the king !

KING. Vetravati, did you see the queen coming this way ?

WARDER. Yes, but when she noticed that I carried a document in my hand she returned.

KING. When the queen knows that I am engaged in the state affairs she is careful not to interrupt me.

WARDER. So please Your Majesty, your minister commands me to say that the calculation of the revenue was so long that he has not found time to examine more than one of the cases brought before him by the citizens. All is noted in this report, which he asks Your Majesty to look over.

KING (*reading*). What is this? "A merchant named Dhana-mitra, trading by sea, was lost in a shipwreck. This enterprising man had no children, hence his acquired wealth goes to the king." So writes the minister. What a misfortune to be childless! But, surely, if this man was so wealthy, he must have had many wives. Let an inquiry be made whether any of them be about to become a mother.

WARDER. So please Your Majesty, it is reported that his wife, the daughter of a master tradesman in Ayodhya, has just completed the ceremonies preceding such an event.

KING. The unborn child has a title to his father's property. Go and tell the minister this.

WARDER. Your Majesty's order shall be obeyed. (*Going*.)

KING. Stay, a moment!

WARDER. Here I am.

KING. It is unnecessary to investigate whether that merchant has left offspring or not.

Let this be publicly proclaimed:

A virtuous subject who has lost

Some dear relation, will again

Find in Dushyanta that lost friend.

WARDER. It shall be proclaimed. (*Goes away and returns after an interval*.) Your Majesty's announcement was hailed with joy, like grateful rain at the right season.

KING (*sighing deeply*). That is the way. When the last scion of a family dies, its property passes over to a stranger. So also at my death the fortunes of the race of Puru will be lost, as the seed which is planted in the soil at the wrong season.

WARDER. Heaven forfend!

KING. How wretched I am, who rejected the happiness that was so near!

SANUMATI (*aside*). Surely, he is thinking of my friend when he blames himself so bitterly.

KING. Yes, I disowned my lawful bride,  
The future glory of my home,

Though in her bosom lay concealed  
 My second self, as in the earth  
 The seed which grows to choicest fruit.

SANUMATI (*aside*). Do not fear ! Your lineage shall not be cut off.

CHATURIKA (*aside to the warder*). You see, it is that affair about the merchant which has caused my royal master's distress. Go and fetch the worthy Mathavya from the watch tower to cheer him.

WARDER. You are right.

KING. Ah, Dushyanta's forefathers will now fear lest the offerings to their shades be no more.

Who after me shall offer them  
 Libations, as ordained by law ?  
 A childless man's bright tears, I fear,  
 Will be their last libation now.

(*Sinks down overcome by anguish.*)

CHATURIKA (*looking at him in consternation*). Compose yourself, compose yourself, my royal master !

SANUMATI (*aside*). Ah, ah ! he does not see the light shining so near him, but still veiled to his view. I will remove the veil. But no ; did I not hear the mighty Indra's mother console Shakuntala with these words : "The gods, eager for their share of the sacrifice, will soon let the king greet his lawful bride." I must, then, bide their time. But I will now comfort my beloved friend with an account of what has happened here.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Help ! Help ! Violence to a Brahman !

KING (*recovering himself, listening*). Ha ! A cry of distress ! Mathavya, I think. Who is there ?

WARDER (*entering hurriedly*). Save him, O king, he is in danger !

KING. Who dares assault the poor cripple ?

WARDER. An invisible demon has seized upon him and put him on the pinnacle of the watch tower.

KING. Impossible ! My own palace visited by evil spirits ! And yet,

Unable day by day to watch  
 The course of my own erring steps,  
 How could in each and every place

I watch the path my subjects walk ?

SAME VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Oh, my friend, help ! help !

KING (*advancing with rapid strides*). Fear not ! Fear not !

VOICE. How am I not to fear when a demon is twisting back my neck, and about to snap it like a sugar-cane ?

KING (*looking around*). My bow ! My bow !

SLAVE (*entering with a bow*). Here, sire, is your bow and your arm-guard. (*The king grasps the bow and arrows.*)

ANOTHER VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ah, thirsting for your life-blood, wretch,

I'll kill you, struggling all in vain,

Just as the tiger kills his prey.

Let King Dushyanta save you now,

The great protector, if he can !

KING (*in fury*). What ! He dares defy me. Hold there, ghoul.

The time has come. (*Draws his bow.*) Yetravati, to the terrace !

WARDER. This way, sire. (*They hurry there.*)

KING (*looking all around*). How's this ? Nothing is to be seen !

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Help ! Help ! I see you, though you do not see me. Like a mouse in the claws of a cat, I despair of my life.

KING. Away, demon, priding yourself on your power of becoming invisible ! My dart shall find you out.

I fix an arrow which shall slay

A monster doomed to death, but save

A worthy Brahman, as the swan

That, thirsting for the lily juice,

Its water spurns, but sucks its milk.

(*Takes aim.*)

(*Enter Matali, the god Indra's charioteer, with the Jester, whom he releases.*)

MATALI. Against the demons draw your bow,

Make them your aim ; so Indra bids.

The noble turn upon a friend

Benignant looks, not cruel darts.

KING (*putting back his arrow*). Ah, Matali ? Welcome, charioteer of the mighty Indra !

JESTER. So, he now greets with a welcome the monster who was about to slaughter poor me like a beast for sacrifice !



MATALI (*smiling*). Worthy prince, now hear on what errand  
Indra has sent me into your presence.

KING. I am all attention.

MATALI. There is a race of gaints, the descendants of Kalanemi, called "The Invincible."

KING. The celestial messenger Narada has already told me about them.

MATALI. Your friend, the mighty god, cannot  
Destroy that brood, and bids you now  
Crush them with your resistless arm.  
The moon dispels the gloom of night,  
Which is unconquered by the sun.

May you therefore now, armed as you are, ascend the celestial car of Indra and advance to victory.

KING. The mighty Indra greatly honors me by this distinction. But tell me, why did you act so toward Mathavya?

MATALI. I will explain. As I saw your Majesty's spirit crushed by some deep distraction, which I could not explain, I chose this means of rousing your energy by moving you to anger.

The embers flare when they are stirred,  
The serpent swells when stung to ire,  
A man regains his fearlessness  
When roused to action all at once.

KING (*aside to the jester*). My friend, the command of the mighty Indra must be obeyed. Inform my minister Pishuna of what has happened, and give him this message from me :

"Bend all the powers of your soul  
Upon the welfare of the realm !  
My bow is braced for other deeds."

JESTER. Your command shall be fulfilled. (*Exit.*)

MATALI. Mighty king, ascend the chariot. (*The king ascends. Exeunt.*)

## ACT SEVENTH

*Scene—The Sky. (Enter the King and Matali in the car of Indra, moving in the air.)*

KING. O Matali, even though I have fulfilled the behests of Indra, I feel myself unworthy of such a mark of distinction. MATALI (*smiling*). Mighty prince, I should say that neither of you is contented with himself.

You now esteem your aid too slight  
For the reward the god bestows,  
And he thinks that reward is naught,  
Compared to your heroic feats.

KING. No, Matali, do not say so. The distinction he conferred on me at the moment of my departure exceeded all my expectations, for he then bade me, in the presence of all the celestial beings, to be seated on the throne at his side,  
And placed on my unworthy head  
A garland of eternal blooms  
Tinged with the sandal of his breast,  
And smiled upon his son, who stood  
With inward longing near his throne.

MATALI. What have you not deserved at the hands of the heavenly lord ?

Twice Indra's heaven has been saved  
From the distress of gaint broods,  
Once by your whetted darts, O King,  
And once by Vishnu's lion claws.

KING. The praise belongs to the mighty Indra.  
When men perform their mighty deeds  
They owe it to the grace of gods.  
How could the dawn dispel the night,  
Were he not seated on the car  
In front of the refulgent sun ?

MATALI. A proper remark. (*Driving on.*) Great prince, look ! the glory of your fame has reached even the highest heaven :  
With tints bestowed by heavenly nymphs,  
The dwellers of the starry spheres  
Depict your valiant deeds on leaves  
Of the immortal Kalpa tree,  
And tune melodious hymns to thee.

KING. Good Matali, yesterday when I ascended the sky, I was so eager to meet the demons in battle that I did not observe the way to Indra's heaven. Which path of the seven winds are we following now ?

MATALI. This path, which once was purified  
 By Vishnu's second stride, is named  
 The pathway of "The Coursing Wind"  
 Which moves the triple Ganges on,  
 And makes the Seven Stars revolve,  
 Distributing their glittering rays.

KING. Hence, then, that sensation of profound repose which  
 pervades my soul and body. (*Looks at the wheels*). Ah,  
 we have reached the path of the terrestrial clouds.

MATALI. Why do you think so ?

KING. A mist bedews the circling wheels,  
 The storm-birds dart between their spokes,  
 The steeds with fiery lightnings gleam ;  
 We're passing, sure, the rain-filled clouds !

MATALI. In a moment your Majesty will be in your own do-  
 minions.

KING (*looking down*). The world of mortals, how wonderful  
 it shows, as we are speeding downward !

The mountains rise from sinking plains ;  
 The trees stand forth with lofty trunks  
 From out a mass of covering leaves ;  
 The slender streams to rivers grow ;  
 Behold ! the earth seems hurled with might  
 Toward the path in which we move !

MATALI. Glorious sight ! (*Looking down with rapture.*) Indeed,  
 the earth looks exceedingly lovely.

KING. Good Matali, what are those mountains ? Look, they  
 bathe their feet in two oceans ; and, like a bank of clouds  
 illumined by the evening sun, they pour down a flood of  
 gold.

MATALI. Mighty prince, it is the "Golden Peak," the mountain  
 home of the dwarfs of wealth, the place where acts of pe-  
 nance attain their perfection.

There Kashyapa, the holy sire  
 Of gods and demons, born himself  
 Of Brahman's son, does penitence  
 In deep seclusion, with his wife.

KING. I must not neglect so good an opportunity of obtaining  
 his blessing. I should like to visit this holy personage to  
 pay him my homage.

MATALI. An excellent resolve ! (*Guides the car to the earth.*)

KING (*with surprise*). The circling wheels move without noise,  
No clouds of dust around us rise,  
And though the car has reached the earth,  
It glides above its surface on.

MATALI. Such is the difference between the car of Indra and that of Your Majesty.

KING. Good Matali, in which direction is Kashyapa's holy abode ?

MATALI (*pointing with his hand*). Where, like a rooted tree, that saint,

Half covered by an ant-hill, stands,  
Toward the dazzling sun-orb turned ;  
His breast twined with a serpent's skin,  
His neck with a decaying vine,  
Which circles it with chafing grasp ;  
His matted hair, in which the birds  
Build their safe nests, descending low  
About his shoulders and his breast.

KING. I salute you reverently, man of austere penance !

MATALI (*checking the progress of the car.*) Mighty prince, we are now in the sacred grove of Kashyapa, where the ever-blooming mandara tree, reared by Aditi, his wife, is growing.

KING. This sacred retreat surpasses even Indra's heaven.  
I feel as if bathing in a sea of divine ambrosia.

MATALI (*stopping the chariot*). Descend, mighty prince.

KING (*alighting*). And what will you do yourself, Matali ?

MATALI. Now that the chariot is stopped, I will also descend.  
(*Alights.*) This way, great prince ! (*Walking on.*) See here the sacred groves where these venerable saints perform their penance !

KING. Yes, I am gazing with wonder.

This is the place the sages sought  
In penance. These, the groves where life  
Is nourished by ambrosial air,  
Here thrives the heavenly kalpa tree,  
And saints perform their sacred rites,  
Where they may bathe in sparkling waves,  
Embrowned with golden lotus dust,  
And rest them in profoundest thought

On jeweled marble slabs, unmoved  
Even though celestial nymphs allure.

MATALI. In truth, the aspirations of noble men are ever upward. (*Taking a few steps and speaking off the stage.*) Please, honored Shakalya, how is the holy Kashyapa engaged now? . . . What do you say? That he is just now explaining the duties of a faithful spouse to his wife, who has questioned him on the subject, and to the wives of the great saints.

KING (*listening*). Well, it is proper to wait for the leisure of holy men.

MATALI (*looking at the king*). Be seated near this ashoka tree, while I watch the opportunity of announcing you to the venerable father of Indra.

KING. As you think proper. (*Stops below the tree.*)

MATALI. Then I will do as proposed.

KING (*evinced a tremor of the right arm*).

Why does my arm throb? I've no hope.  
The bliss I scorned is gone forever!

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Do not be so wild. There is his untamed spirit again.

KING (*listening*). This, surely, is no place for impatient words. Who can be the object of such rebuke? (*Looking in the direction of the sound. Smiling.*) Ah, who is that child attended by the two hermit women? His nature is certainly not a child's:

He drags a lion's cub with force,  
Its mother suckling, out to play,  
And tears its mane in violent sport.

(*Enter a Child, attended by Two Hermit Women, in the manner described.*)

CHILD. Open your mouth, my young lion; I will count your teeth.

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. Naughty child! Why will you always be teasing the animals? Don't you know we care for them as for our children? Your heart is growing ever bolder, and it is with good right the hermits call you Sarvadamana, "The All Tamer."

KING. Why is my heart drawn toward this child as if he were my son? It must be my own childlessness that causes this yearning.

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. Look out ! The lioness will surely be after you if you don't release her cub.

CHILD (*laughing*). Why ! how frightened I am ! (*Pouting defiantly his under lip.*)

KING (*aside*). A germ of mighty energy  
This child appears, a smoldering spark  
Which only bides the fuel yet  
To burst into a blazing flame.

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. Let go that young lion, my little child. I will give you something else to play with.

CHILD. What is it ? Let me have it. (*Holds out his hand.*)

KING. How is this ? His hand bears the mark of universal empire.

His hand, stretched out to grasp the toy,  
With fingers half together knit  
By a translucent web, how like  
A lotus whose expanding leaves  
The early dawn with kindling glow  
Has only half unfolded yet.

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. You cannot check him by mere words, dear Suvrata. Go to my cottage and fetch him the gay peacock of clay which belongs to the little hermit boy Markandeya.

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. I will. (*Exit.*)

CHILD. No, no ! I will play with the young lion. (*Looks at the woman, laughing.*)

KING. I feel a great fondness for this unruly child.

Oh, blessed they who bear with joy  
Upon their breast the darling child  
That, fondly seeking refuge there,  
And soiling it with dusty feet,  
Displays his little budding teeth,  
As he, with smiles of innocence,  
In faltering accents full of mirth,  
Attempts his charming prattle there !

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. No, he pays no attention to my word. (*Looking about.*) I wonder whether any of the hermits are about here. (*Perceives the king.*) Noble sir, would you kindly come here and free the young lion from the hand of

this child, who is teasing it in childish play, and unwilling to let it go ?

KING (*approaching, smiling*). Hear me, you son of a great saint :

How can you, violating so  
The spirit of this grove, pervert  
Your father's kindness unto beasts,  
Just as the black snake's young disturb  
The rootlets of the sandal tree.

WOMAN. Noble sir, he is not the son of a saint.

KING. His behavior, not less than his appearance, accordant with it, would suggest this. Yet I judged from his abode, that he was.

(*Follows the child, leading him by the hand, as asked by the woman. Aside.*)

If so a stranger's child can thrill  
My soul with rapture by his touch,  
What bliss must he impart to him,  
The happy man, who gave him birth !

HERMIT WOMAN (*gazing at them both*) Wonderful ! Wonderful !

KING. What do you mean, venerable woman ?

HERMIT WOMAN. I am amazed at the surprising resemblance between the child and yourself, and at his confiding trust in you, a stranger

KING (*fondling the child*). If he is not a hermit's son, of what race does he come ?

HERMIT WOMAN. Of the race of Puru.

KING (*aside*). What do I hear ? Of the same descent as myself ! That explains how the good woman could find a similarity between us. Well, it has been the custom of the Purus to pass their last days in seclusion.

They live at first in royal courts,  
With all the pleasures of the world,  
For the protection of their realm,  
But dwell at last beneath the trees  
Of hallowed groves, where they observe  
A hermit's vow in holy rites.

(*Aloud*). But no mortal can gain admission to this abode by his own power.

HERMIT WOMAN. 'What you say is true. But this child's mother

is a celestial nymph who was admitted to give him birth in the sacred grove of Kashyapa.

KING (*aside*). An, how hope is again stirring in my heart ! (*Aloud*). What is the name, please, of the saintly prince who was her spouse ?

HERMIT WOMAN. Who would utter the name of one that repudiates his own lawful wife ?

KING (*apart*). Ah, this is a description of myself. If, then, I should ask the name of this child's mother ? (*Reflecting*). But no, it is not fitting to make inquiries about another man's wife.

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN (*returning with the china peacock in her hand*). Here, Sarvadamana, is the beautiful shakunta bird. Look !

CHILD (*looking round*). What, my mother ? Where is she ?

BOTH WOMEN. Ah, the loving child thought it was the name of his mother, Shakuntala.

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. No, dear child, I told you to look at this beautiful china peacock.

KING (*aside*). What, the name of his mother then is Shakuntala ! Yet, this name is not uncommon. Like a mirage of the desert, it may, perhaps, only lead to bitter disappointment.

CHILD. Dear nurse, I love this pretty peacock. (*Takes the toy from her hand*).

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN (*looking at him with dismay*). Ah, I do not see the amulet on his wrist.

KING. Do not be distressed. There it lies. He lost it in playing with the young lion. (*Is about to pick it up*).

BOTH HERMIT WOMEN. Do not touch it ! For your life, do not touch it ! . . . Why, he has actually picked it up. How is it possible ?

KING. Why would you prevent me ?

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. Know, oh, great king, that the holy Kashyapa gave this amulet called "The Invincible", to this child as a blessing, when the natal rites were performed. If it falls on the ground, no one except the child's father or mother can touch it unhurt.

KING. And if another person should touch it ?

FIRST HERMIT WOMAN. Then it instantly changes into a serpent, and bites him.



KING. Have you ever seen this change with your own eyes ?

BOTH HERMIT WOMEN. More than once.

KING (*enraptured ; aside*). How blessed I am that my soul's yearning is being fulfilled ! (*Takes the child to his bosom*).

SECOND HERMIT WOMAN. Come, Suvrata, let us proclaim the glad tidings to our pious Shakuntala.

CHILD. Let me go, so that I may hasten to my mother.

KING. My dear child, you shall go with me to your mother and gladden her heart.

CHILD. Dushyanta is my father, not you.

KING. His objection confirms my belief.

(*Enter Shakuntala with her hair in a single braid in token of mourning*).

SHAKUNTALA. As I heard that Sarvadamana's amulet was unchanged, though a stranger took it from the ground, I could not believe my fortune. Yet, considering what Sanumati has told me, it might be so.

KING (*perceiving her*). Oh, this is my adored Shakuntala. This is she,

Who, clad in somber mourning dress,  
Her face emaciated with grief,  
Her hair twined in a single braid,  
And every motion pure and chaste,  
Prolongs that vow of widowhood  
I forced, unmerciful, on her !

SHAKUNTALA (*gazing at the king, who is colorless with painful emotion*). He surely is not my revered husband. Who, then, can he be that contaminates by his touch my son, who bears the protecting amulet ?

CHILD (*going to his mother*). Mother, who is this man ? He embraces me and calls me his son.

KING. Oh, my beloved, if now you will recognize me, my cruelty to you will be turned into happiness.

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Be of good cheer, my heart ! Destiny is appeased and takes pity on you. It is truly my lord !

KING. Hail, beautiful love ! who meets me here,  
Whose dark oblivion is dissolved !  
The eclipse is past, and Rohini  
Is now united with the moon.

SHAKUNTALA. May my noble lord be victorious ! (*She stops short, her voice choked with tears*).

KING. Beloved wife,

Your greeting word "victorious"  
Was checked by tears, and yet I am  
Triumphant, since I now behold  
Your lovely face with pallid lips

CHILD. Mother, who is this man ?

SHAKUNTALA. Ask your destiny, my child.

KING (*falling at Shakuntala's feet*).

Oh, banish, darling, from your soul  
The bitter feeling of my act.  
Oblivion then darkened my mind,  
And dark minds often spurn their bliss,  
As the blind man shakes from his hand  
A garland, thinking it a snake.

SHAKUNTALA. Rise, my noble husband ! It was, no doubt, my own sins in a previous life which at that time bore bitter fruit, since my noble husband, whose soul is compassionate, could act harshly toward me. (*The king rises*). But tell me, my lord, how did you ever remember again your unfortunate wife ?

KING. When the thorn of remorse is extracted from my heart,  
I will tell you all.

Now, darling, let me soothe remorse  
By wiping off the tears that damp  
The curving fringes of your eyes—  
Those tears which once, in former days,  
With clouded mind I did not heed,  
As they fell burning on your lips. (*Wipes away the tears*).

SHAKUNTALA (*perceiving the signet ring*). Oh, my honored husband, there is the ring !

KING. Yes, when I recovered this ring my memory was restored.

SHAKUNTALA. It forsook me when it should have saved me from being disavowed by my lord ; that was evil.

KING. Receive it back, as the gentle creeper receives its flower again in token of loving union with the spring !

SHAKUNTALA. No, I dare no longer trust it. May my husband keep it. (*Enter Malati*).

MATALI. Hail, great prince ! Happy are you to have found your spouse and to behold the face of your son.

KING. My heart's desire has borne delicious fruit. But tell me, Matali, is Indra aware of this event ?

MATALI. What, indeed, is unknown to the gods ? But now follow me, noble prince. The divine Kashyapa vouchsafes you an interview.

KING. Dear Shakuntala, take our child. May you lead the way and introduce me to the saint.

SHAKUNTALA. My heart throbs, as I am to appear before the venerable saint with my husband.

KING. On a joyful occasion it is well to observe custom. Come, come ! *(All advance. Kashyapa appears seated on a throne with his wife, Aditi).*

KASHYAPA *(gazing at the king)*. O Aditi, behold  
Dushyanta, guardian of the earth,  
Who leads the battles of your son  
And grants repose unto his bolt,  
Thus turned into an ornament.

ADITI. His noble form betrays his dignity.

MATALI *(to the king)*. Mighty prince, these two progenitors of the celestials are contemplating you as affectionately as a son. You may advance toward them.

KING. O Matali,  
Are these the pair of Brahma's kin,  
From Daksha and Marichi sprung ?  
The pair whom sages call the source  
Of all the solar gods, and who  
Begot the lord of sacrifice  
And ruler of the triple world.  
The pair from whom a greater one  
Than Brahma even chose to be born.

MATALI. Even so.

KING *(prostrating himself)*. Dushyanta, the servant of Indra, offers you both his adoration.

KASHYAPA. My son, may you live long, and reign over the earth !

ADITI. My son, may you ever be an invincible hero !

SHAKUNTALA. With my son I kneel before you.

KASHYAPA. My daughter,

Your noble lord seems Indra now,  
 Your child like Jayanta, his son :  
 Be you as happy as his wife !  
 No better blessing can I give.

ADITI. My daughter, may you be honored by your lord.  
 May your son live long to be the joy of two families ! Now  
 be seated. (*All sit down before Kashyapa*).

KASHYAPA (*denoting each of them in turn*).

Hail to the pure Shakuntala,  
 To you, and to her noble son !  
 A happy union of these three :  
 Devotion, energy, and wealth.

KING. Revered Kashyapa, my desires were fulfilled before I  
 was admitted to your presence. Your favor is unprecedented.  
 The blossoming precedes the fruit,  
 The gathering clouds precede the rain,  
 And cause effect ; such nature's course.  
 But the fulfillment of my wish  
 Came before I sought your favor here.

MATALI. It is thus the progenitors of the world confer their  
 boons.

KING. Revered Kashyapa, I once wedded this your servant in  
 Gandharva nuptials. But when, later, she was conducted  
 to my palace by her relatives I disowned her, because my  
 memory was obscured, and have thus deeply offended your  
 kinsman, the venerable Kanva. Only some time afterward  
 I remembered, at the sight of this ring, that I had actually  
 married his daughter. This change seems to me very mys-  
 terious.

It seems as strange, as if a man  
 Who sees before his very eyes  
 An elephant should not believe,  
 But when it leaves begin to doubt,  
 And by its footprints be convinced.

KASHYAPA. My son, cease to think yourself at fault. Even for  
 your delusion you are not responsible. Listen.

KING. I am attention.

KASHYAPA. When Menaka, descending to the Fairies' Pool,  
 saw her daughter Shakuntala's anguish, she took her up  
 and brought her here to Aditi. Then I perceived by my

divine power of meditation that you had repudiated your poor lawful wife in consequence of a curse of Durvasa's, and that the curse would cease on the discovery of the ring.

KING (*drawing a deep breath*). I am, then, freed from reproach !

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). Joy ! joy ! then my lord did not disown me of his own accord. But this curse—I cannot remember it. I must have brought it upon myself unconsciously that day when I was so distracted after the separation from my husband. Hence the admonition of my two friends to show him the ring.

KASHYAPA. My daughter, your desire is fulfilled. Harbor no resentment against your partner.

He disowned you through a curse,  
And acted harsh, bound by its spell.  
Now your power is again supreme  
Upon a heart from darkness free,  
As an image in its undimmed form  
Shows in a glass, from tarnish cleansed.

KING. Holy Kashyapa, he shall be the pillar of my race.  
(*Taking the child by the hand*)

KASHYAPA. Know that he will become a ruler of the entire earth.

A mighty hero, he shall cross  
The ocean in a fleeting car,  
And seize this earth of seven isles.  
Now as a tamer of the beasts,  
His name is Sarvadamana,  
But then, supporting all the world,  
He will be hailed as Bharata.

KING. We hope everything of him for whom your Holiness has performed the natal rites.

ADITI. My honored lord, let Kanva now be informed of the fulfillment of his daughter's desire. Menaka, her loving mother, is my attendant. I shall inform her.

SHAKUNTALA (*aside*). The revered matron has given expression to my own wish.

KASHYAPA. Through the power of his penance the holy Kanva already knows it all.

KING. Then the hermit is no longer offended with me !

KASHYAPA. Nevertheless, it is meet that we should send him the glad tidings and hear his reply. Ho, there !

DISCIPLE (*entering*). Holy master, I am at your command.

KASHYAPA. Galava, hasten through the air to the holy Kanva and bring him from me the joyful news that the curse has ceased, that Dushyanta's memory is restored, and that he is again united with Shakuntala, who has borne him a son.

DISCIPLE. Your command, holy master, shall be obeyed.

KASHYAPA. And now, my son, reascend with your wife and your child the car of Indra, and return to your royal city.

KING. Revered father, I obey.

KASHYAPA. And now at last.

May Indra grant abundant rains  
To all the subjects of your realm !  
And you by frequent offerings gain  
The blessed favor of the gods.  
And may revolving ages pass  
In acts of mutual friendship thus  
With blessings unto heaven and earth.

KING. Holy Kashyapa, I will strive, as far as I am able, to gain this happiness.

KASHYAPA. My son, what other favor can I grant you ?

KING. What favor is greater than the one already bestowed ? Since, however, revered father, you desire to grant yet one more blessing, may the saying of the holy Bharata be fulfilled :

May rulers ever seek their subjects' good !  
May those profoundly versed in charming lore  
Do constant honor to Sarasvati,  
The goddess of the arts and literature !  
And may the purple, self-existent god,  
Shiva, whose living force pervades the world,  
Save me from being born again on earth! (*Exeunt omnes*).



KALIDASA

*Vikramorvacie*  
*or The Hero and The Nymph*

TRANSLATED BY

SRI AUROBINDO



## INTRODUCTION

THAT *Shakuntala*, the preceding play in this volume is Kalidasa's masterpiece and, indeed, the masterpiece of the Indian theatre, has been widely acknowledged. The admirable scholar, A. W. Ryder, considered Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* as the earliest of his three surviving dramas and *Vikramorvacie* as his last. This conjecture, probably less convincing historically than philosophically, has at least its critical value. *Malavikagnimitra* appears precisely to serve its more modest need, whereas *Vikramorvacie* may possibly evince a falling off of power after *Shakuntala*, with some tendency to travel on the momentum of that remarkable achievement.

In all probability *Malavikagnimitra* was written for some special occasion at court during the Spring festival. It is sophisticated entertainment, studiously light, airy, witty, and in no sense profound. As frequently observed, its effectiveness depends almost as much upon the dancing in its earlier scenes and the singing in its later as upon its glittering poetry or its slender plot, which combines the charms of *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The overheard conversations in the garden remind a Westerner of comic opera, as in the central scenes of *Così fan tutti*, or the last act of *Figaro*. We observe the ladies of court, or perhaps it would better be said, of the harem (translators render the word differently) at their recreation, enjoying swings or ball-playing, or the plucking and arranging of spring flowers. The slight plot is deliberately repellent to prosaic credibility. An almost tinkling gaiety, as in a rococo dance, prevails through most of its scenes. The Jester plays a leading role ; the girls are merely love-sick ; and no one views the amorous woes of the king overseriously. The prevailing mood resembles that of an idyllic pastoral painting by Lancret, though, again, Kalidasa enjoys the advantage of a singularly ripe culture. His sophistication is unexcelled. Since this play's temper is at least approximated in the early acts of *Nagananda*, by Harsha, to be read later in this volume, as well as in Harsha's *Ratnavali* or *The Necklace*, the *Malavikagnimitra* has not been included.

*Vikramorvacie* may best be appreciated as a simplified version of *Shakuntala*, with both loss and gain in this comprehensive transition. In its formal aspects *Shakuntala* is the more romantic, *Vikramorvacie* the more classical, even though the characters in *Shakuntala* are more of the earth, in *Vikramorvacie*, more of the heavens. The latter is briefer and much closer to a pure or lyric poetry. The vivacity of theatrical action has been reduced but the basic force of the conception remains powerful. The lesser play rises to a climax in Act Four. As in *Shakuntala*, the beginning is on a relatively modest plane, but here the force of the poetry does not mount towards a magnificent finale. In this play the final act takes on more the aspect of a stage tableau, or ritualized festival, than of a climax in drama. Father, mother, and child are united and promised felicity together for the span of mortal life. The child is crowned heir to the kingdom ; the celestial nymph told that on the occasion of her husband's death, still well removed in years, she will return to her place in heaven. The charm of the scene lies in its simplicity ; it resembles the finale of *Rama's Later History* somewhat as chamber music resembles the symphony.

The characters in *Vikramorvacie* are clearly more stylized and less personal than those of *Shakuntala*. We stand more explicitly among theatrical conventions and are less powerfully transported into the epic world. A Western reader is likely to find more akin to Ovid in *Vikramorvacie*, less akin to Virgil. Yet much beauty of a delicate nature shines even in its earlier scenes, notably in the episode on the balcony of the palace as seen flooded by moonlight. The great and unique episode is clearly the soliloquy in the Fourth Act, unique because none of the imitations of it, as Bhavabhuti's in *Malati and Madhava*, in any respect equals the original. Hostile magic has caused Pururavas, the king, to lose Urvasie, his celestial bride. Through a misstep scarcely her own fault—certainly more innocent than *Shakuntala's*—she has, unknown to her lover, been transformed into an inconspicuous, low-creeping vine. The king seeks her in the woodlands where they have once enjoyed their love. Under the influence of a passionate grief, which the audience views as heroic madness, he queries many creatures and objects in nature for news of his beloved : a cloud, a flowering bush, the grass, a peacock, a cuckoo, a swan, a

a drake, a bee, an elephant, a mountain, which replies emptily with its echo, a river, a stag. Finally, he is led by the magic aid of a small red jewel to embrace an inconspicuous vine, which reminds him of his beloved grief-stricken by their mutual loss. With this sympathetic gesture, when for the first time his thoughts are more upon her than upon himself, the curse is broken and the nymph stands before him, conjured up, one assumes, by the final purification of his own love. The poetry of this famous soliloquy attains a richness scarcely found in any other scene of Sanskrit drama. It strikes the very core and soul of Kalidasa's humane and poetic vision. Repugnant to prosaic reason, the soliloquy is a triumph of aesthetic intuition, eloquent with the overtones of the dominant philosophy and religion of the East. To the relatively realistic scenes of *The Little Clay Cart* or *Mudraraksasa*, powerful as they are, Western drama affords at least strong analogues. But the central scene in *Vikramorvasie* is indelibly stamped with the signature of the Orient. Moreover, it reaches an exalted height of creative imagination.

*Vikramorvacie*  
*or*  
*The Hero and The Nymph*

*Characters*

PURURAVAS, son of Buddha and Ila, grandson of the Moon,  
king of the world, reigning at Pratisthana

MANAVAKA, a Brahmin, the king's jester and companion

LATAVYA, Chamberlain of the king's seraglio

CHITRARATHI, king of the Gandharvas, musicians of Heaven

GALAVA and PELAVA, disciples of Bharat, preceptor of the  
arts in Heaven

AYUS, son of Pururavas

Charioteer

QUEEN AUSHINARIE, wife of Pururavas and daughter of the  
king of Kashi

URVASIE, an *Apsara*, or Nymph of Heaven, born from the  
thigh of Narayan

NIPUNIKA, the Queen's handmaid

CHITRALEKHA, SAHAJANYA, RAMBHA, and MENAKA, Nymphs  
of Heaven

SATYAVATIE, a hermitess

A Huntress

Girls, attendant on the king ; Amazons

ACT ONE

*Invocation*

He in Vedanta by the Wise pronounced  
Sole Being, who the upper and under world

Pervading overpasses, whom alone  
 The name of God describes, here applicable  
 And pregnant—crippled else of force, to others  
 Perverted—and the Yogins who aspire  
 To rise above the human death, break in  
 Breath, soul and senses passionately seeking  
 The Immutable, and in their own hearts find—  
 He, easily by work and faith and love  
 Attainable, ordain your heavenly weal !

*(After the invocation the Actor-Manager speaks.)*

MANAGER. No need of many words. *(He speaks into the green-room.)*

Hither, good friend.

*(The Assistant-Manager enters.)*

ASSISTANT. Behold me.

MANAGER. Often has the audience seen  
 Old dramas by our earlier poets staged ;  
 Therefore today a piece as yet unknown  
 I will present them, Vikram and the Nymph.  
 Remind our actors then most heedfully  
 To con their parts, as if on each success  
 Depended.

ASSISTANT. I shall do so. *(He goes.)*

MANAGER. And now to you,  
 Noble audience, I bow down and pray,  
 If not from kindness to us your friends  
 And caterers, yet from pride in the high name  
 That graces this our plot, heedful attention,  
 Gentles, to Vikramorvacie, the work  
 Of Kalidasa.

VOICES. Help ! O help, help, help !

Whoever is on the side of Heaven, whoever  
 Has passage through the paths of level air.

MANAGER. What cry is this that breaks upon our prologue  
 From upper worlds, most like the wail distressed  
 Of ospreys, sad but sweet as moan of bees  
 Drunken with honey in deep summer bloom,  
 Or the low cry of distant cuckoo ? or hear I  
 Women who move on Heaven's azure stage

Splendid with rows of seated Gods, and chant  
 In airy syllables a liquid sweetness ? (*After some thought*)  
 Ah, now I have it. She who from the thigh  
 Of the great tempted sage Narayan sprang  
 Radiant, Heaven's nymph, divinest Urvasie,  
 In middle air from great Coilasa's lord  
 Returning, to the enemies of Heaven  
 Is prisoner ; therefore the sweet multitude  
 Of Apsaras send forth melodious cry  
 Of pathos and complaint.

(*He goes. The Nymphs of Heaven enter, Rambha, Menaka, Sahajanya and many others.*)

NYMPHS. Help, help, O help !

Whoever is on the side of Heaven, whoever  
 Has passage through the paths of level air.

(*Pururavas enters suddenly and with speed in a chariot with his charioteer.*)

PURURAVAS. Enough of lamentation ! I am here,  
 Ilian Pururavas, from grandiose worship  
 In Surya's brilliant house returned To me,  
 O women ! say against what ye cry for rescue.

RAMBHA. Rescue from Titan violence, O King.

PURURAVAS. And what has Titan violence to you  
 Immortal done of fault, O Heaven's women ?

MENAKA. King, hear us.

PURURAVAS. Speak.

MENAKA. Our sister, our dear sister !

The ornament of Eden and its joy !  
 Whom Indra by asceticism alarmed  
 Made use of like a lovely sword to kill  
 Spiritual longings, the eternal refutation  
 Of Luxmie's pride of beauty, Urvasie !  
 Returning from Cuvera's halls, O she  
 Was met, was taken. Caysky, that dire Titan,  
 Who in Hiranyapoor exalts his house,  
 Beheld her and in great captiving hands  
 Ravished, Chitralekha and Urvasie.  
 We saw them captive haled.

PURURAVAS. Say, if you know,  
 What region of the air received that traitor ?

SAHAJANYA. North-east he fled.

PURURAVAS. Therefore expel dismay.

I go to bring you back your loved one, if  
Attempt can do it.

RAMBHA. O worthy this of thee !

O from the Lunar splendor truly sprung !

PURURAVAS. Where will you wait my advent, nymphs of  
Heaven ?

NYMPHS. Upon this summit called the Peak of Gold,  
O King, we shall expect thee.

PURURAVAS. Charioteer,

Urge on my horses to the far north-east ;  
Gallop through Heaven like the wind.

CHARIOTEER. 'Tis done.

PURURAVAS. O nobly driven ! With speed like this I could

O'ertake Heaven's eagle though he fled before me

With tempest in his vans. How much more then

This proud transgressor against Heaven's King !

Look, charioteer, beneath my sudden car

The crumbling thunder-clouds fly up like dust,

And the wheels' desperate rotation seems

To make another set of whirling spokes.

The plumes upon the horses' heads rise tall,

Motionless like a picture, and the wind

Of our tremendous speed has made the flag

From staff to airborne end straight as if pointing.

*(They go out in their chariot.)*

RAMBHA. Sisters, the King is gone. Direct we then

Our steps to the appointed summit.

MENAKA. Hasten,

O hasten.

ALL. Hasten, O hasten, come, come, come. *(They ascend the hill.)*

RAMBHA. And O, will he indeed avail to draw

This stab out of our hearts ?

MENAKA. Doubt it not, Rambha.

RAMBHA. No, Menaka, for not so easily

Are Titans overthrown, my sister.

MENAKA. Rambha,

Remember this is he whom Heaven's King,

When battle raised its dreadful face, has called  
With honor from the middle world of men,  
Set in his armed van, and conquered.

RAMBHA. Here too

I hope that he will conquer.

SAHAJANYA. Joy, sisters, joy !

Look where the chariot of the moon appears,  
The Ilian's great deer-banner rushing up  
From the horizon. He would not return  
With empty hands, sisters. We can rejoice.

*(All gaze upwards. Pururavas enters in his chariot with his charioteer ; Urvasie, her eyes closed in terror, supported on the right arm of Chित्रलेखा.)*

CHITRALEKHA. Courage, sweet sisters, courage.

PURURAVAS. O thou too lovely !

Recall thy soul. The enemies of Heaven  
Can injure thee no more ; that danger's over.  
The Thunderer's puissance still pervades the worlds.  
O then uplift these long and lustrous eyes  
Like sapphire lilies in a pool where dawn  
Comes smiling.

CHITRALEKHA. Why does she not, alas !

Recover her sweet reason ? Only her sighs  
Remind us she is living.

PURURAVAS. Too rudely, lady,

Has thy sweet sister been alarmed. For look !  
What tremblings of the heart are here revealed.  
Watch the quick rise and fall incessantly  
That lift between these large magnificent breasts  
The flowers of Eden.

CHITRALEKHA. Sister, O put by

This panic. Fie ! thou art no Apsara.

PURURAVAS. Terror will not give up his envied seat

On her luxurious bosom so thick as flowers ;  
The tremors in her raiment's edge and little  
Heavings and flutterings between her two breasts  
Confess him. *(Urvasie begins to recover.)*

Thou art fortunate, Chित्रलेखा !

Thy sister to her own bright nature comes  
Once more. So have I seen a glorious night



Delivered out of darkness by the moon,  
 Nocturnal fire break through with crests of brightness  
 Its prison of dim smoke. Her beauty, waking  
 From swoon and almost rescued, to my thoughts  
 Brings Ganges as I saw her once o'erwhelmed  
 With roar and ruin of her banks, race wild,  
 Thickening, then gradually from that turmoil  
 Grow clear, emerging into golden calm.

CHITRALEKHA. Be glad, my sister, O my Urvasie.  
 For vanquished are the accursed Titans, foes  
 Of the Divine, antagonists of Heaven.

URVASIE (*Opening her eyes*). Vanquished ? By Indra then  
 whose soul can see  
 Across the world.

CHITRALEKHA. Not Indra, but this King  
 Whose puissance equals Indra.

URVASIE. (*Looking at Pururavas*). O Titans,  
 You did me kindness !

PURURAVAS (*Gazing at Urvasie*). And reason if the nymphs  
 Tempting Narayan Sage drew back ashamed  
 When they beheld this wonder from his thigh  
 Starting. And yet I cannot think of her  
 Created by a withered hermit cold :  
 But rather in the process beautiful  
 Of her creation Heaven's enchanting moon  
 Took the Creator's place, or very Love  
 Grown all one amorousness, or else the month  
 Of honey and its days deep-mined with bloom.  
 How could an aged anchoret, dull and stale  
 With pouring over Scriptures and oblivious  
 To all this rapture of the senses, build  
 A thing so lovely ?

URVASIE. O my Chित्रलेखा,  
 Our sisters ?

CHITRALEKHA. This great prince who slew our fear  
 Can tell us.

PURURAVAS. Sad of heart they wait, O beauty !  
 For with thy sweet ineffugable eyes  
 Who only once was blessed, even he without thee  
 Cannot abstain from pining. How then these

Original affections sister-sweet

Rooted in thee ?

URVASIE. How courteous is his tongue

And full of noble kindness ! Yet what wonder ?

Nectar is natural to the moon. O prince,

My heart's in haste to see once more my loved ones.

PURURAVAS. Lo, where upon the Peak of Gold they stand

Gazing towards thy face, and with such eyes

Of rapture as when men behold the moon

Emerging from eclipse.

CHITRALEKHA. O sister, see !

URVASIE (*Looking longingly at the King*). I do and drink in  
with my eyes my partner

Of grief and pleasure.

CHITRALEKHA (*With a smile ; significantly*). Sister, who is he ?

URVASIE. He ? Oh ! Rambha I meant and all our friends.

RAMBHA. He comes with victory. Urvasie's beside him

And Chित्रalekha. Now indeed this King

Looks glorious like the moon, when near the twin

Bright asterisms that frame best his light.

MENAKA. In both ways are we blest, our lost dear one

Brought back to us, this noble King returned

Unwounded.

SAHAJANYA. Sister, true. Not easily

Are Titans conquered

PURURAVAS. Charioteer, descend.

We have arrived the summit.

CHARIOTEER. As the King

Commands.

PURURAVAS. O I am blest in this descent

Upon unevenness. O happy shock

That threw her great hips towards me. All her sweet  
shoulder

Pressed mine that thrilled and passioned to the touch.

URVASIE (*Abashed*). Move yet a little farther to your side,  
Sister.

CHITRALEKHA (*Smiling*). I cannot ; there's no room.

RAMBHA. Sisters,

This prince has helped us all. 'Twere only grateful

Should we descend and greet him.

ALL. Let us do it. (*They all approach.*)

PURURAVAS. Stay, charioteer, the rush of hooves that she  
Marrying her sweet-browed eagerness with these  
May, mingling with their passionate bosoms, clasp  
Her dearest like the glory and bloom of spring  
Hastening into the open arms of trees.

NYMPHS. Hail to the King felicitous who comes  
With conquest in his wheels !

PURURAVAS. To you, O nymphs,  
As fortunate in your sister's rescued arms.  
(*Urvasie descends from the chariot supported on Chitrlekha's arm.*)

URVASIE. O sisters, sisters, take me to your bosoms.  
(*All rush upon her and embrace her.*)  
Closer, O closer ! hurt me with your breasts !  
I never hoped to see again your sweet  
Familiar faces.

RAMBHA. Protect a million ages,  
Monarch, all continents and every sea ! (*Noise within.*)

CHARIOTEER. My lord, I hear a rumor in the east  
And mighty speed of chariots. Lo, one bright  
With golden armlet, looming down from Heaven  
Like a huge cloud with lightning on its wrist,  
Streams towards us.

NYMPHS. Chitrarath ! 'tis Chitrarath.

CHITRARATH (*Approaches the King with great respect.*)  
Hail to the Indra-helper ! Fortunate  
Pururavas, whose prowess is so ample,  
Heaven's King has grown its debtor.

PURURAVAS. The Gandharava !  
Welcome, my bosom's friend. (*They clasp each other's hands.*) What happy cause  
Of coming ?

CHITRARATH. Indra has heard from Narad's lips  
Of Urvasie by Titan Cayshy haled.  
He bade us to her rescue. We midway  
Heard heavenly bards chanting thy victory,  
And thitherward have turned our march. On, friend,  
With us to Maghavan and bear before thee  
This lovely offering. Great thy service done

To Heaven's high King ; for she who was of old  
Narayan's chief munificence to Indra,  
Is now thy gift, Pururavas. Thy arm  
Has torn her from a Titan's grasp.

PURURAVAS. Comrade,  
Never repeat it ; for if we who are  
On Heaven's side o'erpower the foes of Heaven,  
'Tis Indra's puissance, not our own. Does not  
The echo of the lion's dangerous roar  
Reverberating through the mountain glens  
Scatter with sound the elephants ? We, O friend,  
Are even such echoes.

CHITRARATH. This fits with thy great nature,  
For modesty was ever valor's crown.

PURURAVAS. Not now nor hence is't seasonable for me,  
Comrade, to meet the King of Sacrifice.  
Thou, therefore, to the mighty presence lead  
This beauty.

CHITRARATH. As thou wilt. With me to Heaven !

URVASIE (*Aside to Chitrakleha*). I have no courage to address  
my saviour.

Sister, wilt thou be my voice to him ?

CHITRALEKHA (*Approaching Pururavas*). My lord,  
Urvsie thus petitions—

PURURAVAS. What commands  
The lady ?

CHITRALEKHA. She would have thy gracious leave  
To bear into her far immortal Heavens  
The glory of the great Pururavas  
And dwell with it as with a sister.

PURURAVAS (*Sorrowfully*). Go then ;  
But go for longer meeting.

(*The Gandharavas and the nymphs soar up into the sky.*)

URVASIE. Sister, stay !

My chain is in this creeper caught. Release it.

CHITRALEKHA (*Looking at the King with a smile*).

Oh, yes, indeed, a sad entanglement !

I fear you will not easily be loosed.

URVASIE. Do not mock me, sister. Pray you, untwine it.

CHITRALEKHA. Come, let me try. I'll do my\*possible

To help you. (*She busies herself with the chain.*)

URVASIE (*Smiling*). Sister, think what thou hast promised  
Even afterwards.

PURURAVAS (*Aside*). Creeper, thou dost me friendship ;  
Thou for one moment holdest from the skies  
Her feet desirable. O lids of beauty !  
O vision of her half-averted face !

(*Urvasie, released, looks at the King, then with a sigh at her  
sisters soaring up into the sky.*)

CHARIOTEER. O King, thy shaft with the wild voice of storm  
Has hurled the Titans in the salt far sea,  
Avenging injured Heaven, and now creeps back  
Into the quiver, like a mighty snake  
Seeking its lair.

PURURAVAS. Therefore bring near the chariot,  
While I ascend.

CHÁRIOTEER. 'Tis done. (*The King mounts the chariot.*)

PURURAVAS. Shake loose the reins.

URVASIE (*Gazing at the King, with a sigh, aside*). My benefactor ! my deliverer !

Shall I not see thee more ? (*She goes out with Chitralekha.*)

PURURAVAS (*Looking after Urvasie*). O Love ! O Love !  
Thou mak'st men hot for things impossible  
And mad for dreams. She soars up to the Heavens,  
Her father's middle stride, and draws my heart  
By force out of my bosom. It goes with her,  
Bleeding, as when a wild swan through the sky  
Wings far her flight, there dangles in her beak  
A dripping fibre of the lotus torn. (*They go.*)

## ACT TWO

(*Scene : Park of the King's Palace in Pratisthana. In the  
background the wings of a great building, near it the gates  
of the park, near the bounds of the park an arbor and a small  
artificial hill to the side. Manavaka enters.*)

MANAVAKA. Houp ! Houp ! I feel like a Brahmin who has

had an invitation to dinner ; he thinks dinner, talks dinner, looks dinner, his very sneeze has the music of the dinner-bell in it. I am simply bursting with the King's secret. I shall never manage to hold my tongue in that crowd. Solitude's my only safety. So until my friend gets up from the session of affairs, I will wait for him in this precinct of the House of Terraces. (*Nipunika enters.*)

NIPUNIKA. I am bidden by my lady the King's daughter of Kashi, "Nipunika, since my lord came back from doing homage to the Sun, he has had no heart for anything. So just go and learn from his dear friend, the noble Manavaka, what is disturbing his mind." Well and good ! but how shall I overreach that rogue—a Brahmin he calls himself, with the murrain to him ! But there ! thank Heaven, he can't keep a secret long ; 'tis like a dewdrop on a rare blade of grass. Well, I must hunt him out. O ! there stands the noble Manavaka, silent and sad like a monkey in a picture. I will accost him. (*Approaching*) Salutation to the noble Manavaka !

MANAVAKA. Blessing to your ladyship ! (*Aside*) Ugh, the very sight of this little rogue of a tiring-woman makes the secret jump at my throat. I shall burst ! I shall split ! Nipunika, why have you left the singing lesson and where are you off to ?

NIPUNIKA. To see my lord the King, by my lady's orders.

MANAVAKA. What are her orders ?

NIPUNIKA. Noble sir, this is the Queen's message. "My lord has always been kind and indulgent to me, so that I have become a stranger to grief. He never before disregarded my sorrow"—

MANAVAKA. How ? how ? has my friend offended her in any way ?

NIPUNIKA. Offended ? Why, he addressed my lady by the name of a girl for whom he is pining.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). What, he has let out his own secret ? Then why am I agonizing here in vain ? (*Aloud*) He called her Urvasie ?

NIPUNIKA. Yes. Noble Manavaka, who is that Urvasie ?

MANAVAKA. Urvasie is the name of a certain Apsara. The sight of her has sent the King mad. He is not only tormenting

the life out of my lady, but out of me too with his aversion to everything but moaning.

NIPUNIKA (*Aside*). So ! I have stormed the citadel of my master's secret. (*Aloud*) What am I to say to the Queen ?

MANAVAKA. Nipunika, tell my lady with my humble regards that I am endeavouring my best to divert my friend from this mirage and I will not see her ladyship till it is done.

NIPUNIKA. As your honor commands. (*She goes.*)

BARDS (*Within*). Victory, victory to the King !

The Sun in Heaven for ever labors ; wide  
His beams dispel the darkness to the verge  
Of all this brilliant world. The King too toils,  
Rescuing from night and misery and crime  
His people. Equal power to these is given  
And labor, the King on earth, the Sun in Heaven.  
The brilliant Sun in Heaven rests not from toil ;  
Only at high noon in the middle cusp  
And azure vault the great wheels slacken speed  
A moment, then resume their way ; thou too  
In the mid-moment of daylight lay down  
Thy care, put by the burden of a crown.

MANAVAKA. Here's my dear friend risen from the session.

I will join him. (*He goes out, then re-enters with Pururavas.*)

PURURAVAS (*Sighing*). No sooner seen than in my heart she leaped.

O easy entrance ! since the bannere'd Love  
With his unerring shaft had made the breach  
Where she came burning in.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). Alas the poor

KING's daughter of Kashi !

PURURAVAS (*Looking steadfastly at him*). Hast thou kept thy trust—My secret ?

MANAVAKA (*Depressed*). Ah ! that daughter of a slave  
Has overreached me. Else he would not ask  
In just that manner.

PURURAVAS (*Alarmed*). What now ? Silence ?

MANAVAKA. Why, sir

It's this. I've padlocked so my tongue that even  
To you I could not give a sudden answer.

PURURAVAS. 'Tis well. O how shall I beguile desire ?

MANAVAKA. Let's to the kitchen.

PURURAVAS. Why, what's there ?

MANAVAKA. What's there ?

The question ! From all quarters gathered in  
Succulent sweets and five-fold eatableness,  
Music from saucepan and from frying-pan,  
The beauty of dinner getting ready. There's  
A sweet beguiler to your emptiness !

PURURAVAS(*Smiling*). For you whose heart is in your stomach. I  
Am not so readily eased who fixed my soul  
Upon what I shall hardly win.

MANNAVAKA. Not win ?

Why, tell me, came you not within her sight ?

PURURAVAS. What comfort is in that ?

MANAVAKA. When she has seen you,

How is she hard to win ?

PURURAVAS O your affection

Utters mere partiality.

MANAVAKA. You make me

Desperate to see her. Why, sir, she must be  
A nonpareil of grace. Like me perhaps ?

PURURAVAS. Who could with words describe each perfect limb  
Of that celestial whole ? Take her in brief,  
O friend, for she is ornament's ornament,  
And jewels cannot make her beautiful.  
They from her body get their grace. And when  
You search the universe for similes,  
Her greater beauty drives you to express  
Fair things by her, not her by lesser fairness ;  
So she's perfection's model.

MANAVAKA. No wonder then,

With such a shower of beauty, that you play  
The rainbird open-mouthed to let drops glide  
Graciously down his own particular gullet.  
But whither now ?

PURURAVAS. When love grows large with yearning,

He has no sanctuary but solitude.

I pray you, go before me to the park.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). Oh God, my dinner ! There's no help.  
(*Aloud*).



This way.

Lo, here the park's green limit. See, my lord,  
How this fair garden sends his wooing breeze  
To meet his royal guest.

PURURAVAS. O epithet

Most apt. Indeed this zephyr in fond arms  
Impregnating with honey the spring-creeper  
And flattering with his kiss the white May-bloom,  
Seems to me like a lover girl-divided  
Between affection smooth and eager passion.

MANAVAKA. May like division bless your yearning, sir.

We reach the garden's gate. Enter, my lord.

PURURAVAS. Enter thou first. O ! I was blindly sanguine,  
By refuge in this flowery solitude  
Who thought to heal my pain. As well might swimmer  
Hurled onward in a river's violent hands  
Oppose that roaring tide, as I make speed  
Hither for my relief.

MANAVAKA. And wherefore so ?

PURURAVAS. Was passion not enough to torture me,  
Still racking the resistless mind with thoughts  
Of unattainable delight ? But I  
Must add the mango-tree's soft opening buds,  
And hurt myself with pallied drifting leaves,  
And with the busy zephyr wound my soul.

MANAVAKA. Be not so full of grief. For Love himself  
Will help you soon to your extreme desire.

PURURAVAS. I seize upon thy word,—the Brahmin's speech  
That never can be false !

MANAVAKA. See what a floral

Green loveliness expresses the descent  
And rosy incarnation of the spring.  
Do you not find it lovely ?

PURURAVAS. Friend, I do.

I study it tree by tree and leaf by leaf.  
This courbouc's like a woman's rosy nail,  
But darkens to the edge ; heavy with crimson,  
Yon red asoka breaking out of bud  
Seems all on fire ; and here the carvy mounting  
Slight dust of pollen on his stamen-ends

Clusters with young sweet bloom. Methinks I see  
The infant honeyed soul of spring, half-woman,  
Grow warm with bud of youth.

MANAVAKA. This arbor, green,  
With blossoms, loosened by the shock of bees  
Upon a slab of costly stone prepares  
With its own hands your cushioned honors. Take  
The courtesy.

PURURAVAS. As you will.

MANAVAKA. Here sit at ease.  
The sensitive beauty of the creepers lax  
Shall glide into your soul and gently steal  
The thought of Urvasie.

PURURAVAS. O no, mine eyes  
Are spoilt by being indulged in her sweet looks,  
And petulantly they reject all feebler  
Enchantings, even the lovely embowering bloom  
Of these grace-haunted creepers bending down  
To draw me with their hands. I am sick for her.  
Rather invent some way to my desire.

MANAVAKA. Oh rare ! when Indra for Ahalya pined  
A cheapjack was his counsellor ; you as lucky  
Have me for your ally. Mad all ! mad all !

PURURAVAS. Not so ! affection edging native wit  
Some help it's sure to find for one it loves.

MANAVAKA. Good, I will cogitate. Disturb me not  
With your love-moanings.

PURURAVAS (*His right arm throbbing. Aside*). Her face of  
perfect moonlight

Is all too heavenly for my lips. How canst thou then  
Throb expectation in my arm, O Love ?  
Yet all my heart is suddenly grown glad  
As if it had heard the feet of my desire.

(*He waits hopefully. There enter in the sky Urvasie  
and Chitralekha.*)

CHITRALEKHA. Will you not even tell me where we go ?

URVASIE. Sister, when I upon the Peak of Gold  
Was stayed from Heaven by the creeper's hands,  
You mocked me then. And have you now to ask  
Whither it is I go ?

CHITRALEKHA. To seek the side

Of King Pururavas you journey then ?

URVASIE. Even so shameless is your sister's mind.

CHITRALEKHA. Whom did you send before, what messenger  
To him you love.

URVASIE. My heart.

CHITRALEKHA. O yet think well,  
Sister ; do not be rash.

URVASIE. Love sends me, Love  
Compels me. How then can I think ?

CHITRALEKHA. To that  
I have no answer.

URVASIE. Then take me to him soon.  
Only let not our way be such as lies  
Within the let of hindrance.

CHITRALEKHA. Fear not that.  
' Has not the great Preceptor of the Gods  
Taught us to wear the crest invincible ?  
While that is bound, not any he shall dare  
Of all the Heaven-opposing faction stretch  
An arm of outrage.

URVASIE (*Abashed*). Oh true ! my heart forgot.

CHITRALEKHA. Look, sister ! For in Ganges' gliding waves  
Holier by influx of blue Yamuna,  
The palace of the great Pururavas,  
Crowning the city with its domes, looks down  
As in a glass at its own mighty image.

URVASIE. All Eden to an earthly spot is bound.  
But where is he who surely will commiserate  
A pining heart ?

CHITRALEKHA. This park which seems one country  
With Heaven, let us question. See, the King  
Expects thee, like the pale new-risen moon  
Waiting for moonlight.

URVASIE. How beautiful he is—  
Fairer than when I saw him first !

CHITRALEKHA. It's true.  
Come, we will go to him.

URVASIE. I will not yet.  
Screened in with close invisibility,

I will stand near him, learn what here he talks  
Sole with his friend.

CHITRALEKHA. You'll do your will always.

MANAVAKA. Courage ! your difficult mistress may be caught,  
Two ways.

URVASIE (*Jealously*). O who is she, that happy she  
Being wooed by such a lover, preens herself  
And is proud ?

CHITRALEKHA. Why do you mock the ways of men  
And are a Goddess ?

URVASIE. I dare not, sweet, I fear  
To learn too suddenly my own misfortune,  
If I use heavenly eyes.

MANAVAKA. Listen, you dreamer !  
Are you deaf ? I tell you I have found a way :

PURURAVAS. Speak on.

MANVANAKA. Woo sleep that marries men with dreams,  
Or on a canvas paint in Urvasie  
And gaze on her for ever.

URVASIE (*Aside*). O sinking coward heart, now, now revive

PURURAVAS. And either is impossible. For look !  
How can I, with this rankling wound of love,  
Call to me sleep who marries men with dreams ?  
And if I paint the sweetness of her face,  
Will not the tears, before it is half done,  
Blurring my gaze with mist, blot the dear vision ?

CHITRALEKHA. Heard'st thou ?

URVASIE. I have heard all. It was too little  
For my vast greed of love.

MANAVAKA. Well, that's my stock  
Of counsel

PURURAVAS (*Sighing*). Oh me ! she knows not my heart's  
pain,

Or knowing it, with those heavenly eyes  
Scorns my poor passion. Only the arrowed Love  
Is gratified tormenting with her bosom  
My sad, unsatisfied and pale desire.

CHITRALEKHA. Heard'st thou, sister ?

URVASIE. He must not think so of me !  
I would make answer, sister, but to his face

I have not hardihood. Suffer me then,  
To trust to faery birch-leaf mind-created  
My longing.

CHITRALEKHA. It is well. Create and write.

*(Urvasie writes in a passion of timidity and excitement,  
then throws the leaf between Pururavas and Manavaka.)*

MANAVAKA. Murder ! murder ! I'm killed ! I'm dead ! help !  
help ! *(Looking)* What's this ? a serpent's skin come down  
to eat me ?

PURURAVAS *(Looks closely and laughs)*. No serpent's slough,  
my friend, only a leaf

Of birch-tree with a scroll of writing traced on it.

MANAVAKA. Perhaps the invisible fair Urvasie  
Heard you complain and answers.

PURURAVAS. To desire

Nothing can seem impossible.

*(He takes the leaf and reads it to himself, then with joy.)*

O friend,

How happy was your guess !

MANAVAKA. I told you so.

The Brahmin's speech ! Read, read ! aloud, if it please  
you.

URVASIE *(Aside)*. The Brahmin has his own urbanity !

PURURAVAS. Listen.

MANAVAKA. I am all ears.

PURURAVAS *(Reading aloud)*. "My master and my King !

Were I what thy heart thinks and knows me not,  
Scorning thy love, would then the soft-winged breeze  
Of deathless gardens and the unfading flowers  
That strew the beds of Paradise, to me  
Feel fire !"

URVASIE. What will he say now ?

CHITRALEKHA. What each limb,

That is a drooping lotus-stalk with love,  
Has said already.

MANAVAKA. You're consoled, I hope ?

Don't tell me what you feel. I've felt the same  
When I've been hungry and one popped in on me  
With sweetmeats in a tray.

PURURAVAS. Consoled ! a word

How weak ! I con this speaking of my sweet,  
 This dear small sentence full of beautiful meaning,  
 This gospel of her answering love, and feel  
 Her mouth upon my mouth and her soft eyes  
 Swimming and large gaze down into my own,  
 And touch my lifted lids with hers.

URVASIE. O even

Such sweetness feels thy lover.

PURURAVAS. Friend, my finger

Moistening might blot the lines. Do thou then hold

This sweet handwriting of my love. (*He gives the leaf to Manavaka.*)

MANAVAKA. But tell me,

Why does your mistress, having brought to bloom

Your young desire, deny its perfect fruit ?

URVASIE. O sister, my heart flutters at the thought

Of going to my lord. While I cajole

And strengthen the poor coward, show yourself,

Go to him, tell him all that I may speak.

CHITRALEKHA. I will. (*She becomes visible and approaches the King.*) Hail, lord our King.

PURURAVAS (*Joyfully*). O welcome, welcome !

(*He looks around for Urvsie.*)

Yet, fair one, as the Yamuna not mixed

With Ganges, to the eye that saw their beauty

Of wedded waters, seems not all so fair,

So thou without thy sister givest not

That double delight.

CHITRALEKHA. First is the cloud's dim legion

Seen in the Heavens ; afterwards comes the lightning.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). What ! this is not the very Urvsie ?

Only the favourite sister of that miracle ?

PURURAVAS. Here sit down, fairest.

CHITRALEKHA. Let me first discharge

My duty. Urvsie by me bows down

Her face thus to her monarch's feet, imploring—

PURURAVAS. Rather commanding.

CHITRALEKHA. She whom in Titan hands

Afflicted thou didst pity, thou didst rescue,

Now needs much more thy pity, not by hands

Titan, but crueller violence of love

Oppressed—the sight of thee her sudden cause.

PURURAVAS. O Chitralekha, her thou tell'st me of  
 Passionate for me. Hast thou not eyes to know  
 Pururavas in anguish for her sake ?

One prayer both pray to Kama, 'Iron with iron  
 Melts in fierce heat ; why not my love with me ?'

CHITRALEKHA (*Returning to Urvasie*). Come, sister, to your  
 lord. So much his need

Surpasses yours, I am his ambassador.

URVASIE (*Becoming visible*). How unexpectedly hast thou with  
 ease

Forsook me !

CHITRALEKHA (*With a smile*). In a moment I shall know  
 Who forsakes whom, sister. But come away  
 And give due greeting. (*Urvasie approaches the King  
 fearfully and bows down, then low and bashfully.*) Con-  
 quest to the King !

PURURAVAS. I conquer, love, indeed, when thy dear lips  
 Give greeting to me, vouchsafed to no mortal  
 But Indra only. (*He takes her by both hands and makes  
 her sit down.*)

MANAVAKA. I am a mighty Brahmin and the friend  
 Of all earth's lord. O'erlook me not entirely.

URVASIE (*Smiles and bows to him.*) Peace follow you and keep  
 you.

MESSENGER OF THE GODS (*Cries from within*).

Chitralekha, urge haste on Urvasie.

This day the wardens of the ancient worlds  
 And the great King of Heaven himself will witness  
 That piece where all the passions live and move,  
 Quickened to gracious gesture in the action  
 Deposed in you by Bharat Sage, O sisters. (*All listen,  
 Urvasie sorrowfully.*)

CHITRALEKHA. Thou hear'st the Messenger of Heaven ? Take  
 leave

Sweet, of the King.

URVASIE. I cannot speak !

CHITRALEKHA. My liege,  
 My sister not being lady of herself

Beseeches your indulgence. She would be  
Without a fault before the Gods.

PURURAVAS (*Articulating with difficulty*). Alas !

I must not wish to hinder you when Heaven  
Expects your service. Only do not forget

Pururavas. (*Urvasie goes with her sister, still looking  
backwards towards the King.*) O she is gone ! my eyes  
Have now no cause for sight : they are worthless balls  
Without an object.

MANAVAKA. Why, not utterly. (*He is about to give the birch-  
leaf.*)

There's—Heavens ! It's gone ; it must have drifted down,  
While I, being all amazed with Urvasie,  
Noticed nothing.

PURURAVAS. What is it thou wouldst say ?

There is— ?

MANAVAKA. No need to droop your limbs and pine.

Your Urvasie has to your breast been plucked  
With cords of passion, knots that will not slacken,  
Strive as she may.

PURURAVAS. My soul tells me like comfort.

For as she went, not lady of her limbs  
To yield their sweets to me for ever, yet  
Her heart, which was her own, in one great sob  
From 'twixt two tumbling breasts shaken with sighs  
Came panting out. I hear it throb within me.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). Well, my heart's all a-twitter too. Each  
moment I think he is going to mention the damned birch-  
leaf.

PURURAVAS. With what shall I persuade mine eyes to  
comfort ?

The letter !

MANAVAKA (*Searching*). What ! Hallo ! It's gone ! Come now,  
It was no earthly leaf ; it must have gone  
Flying behind the skirts of Urvasie.

PURURAVAS (*Bitterly, in vexation*). Will you then never leave  
your idiot trick

Of carelessness ? Search for it.

MANAVAKA (*Getting up*). Oh, well ! well !

It can't be far. Why, here it is—or here—or here.



*(While they search, the Queen enters, with her attendants and Nipunika.)*

AUSHINARIE. Now, maiden, is't true thou tell'st me ? Saw'st thou really

My lord and Manavaka approach the arbor ?

NIPUNIKA. I have not told my lady falsehood ever

That she should doubt me.

AUSHINARIE. Well, I will lurk thick-screened

With hanging creepers and surprise what he

Disburdens from his heart in his security.

So I shall know the truth.

NIPUNIKA (*Sulkily*). Well, as you please. (*They advance.*)

AUSHINARIE (*Looking ahead*). What's yonder like a faded rag that lightly

The southern wind guides towards us ?

NIPUNIKA. It is a birch-leaf.

There's writing on it ; the letters, as it rolls,

Half show their dinted outlines. Look, it has caught

Just on your anklet's spike. I'll lift and read it.

*(She disengages the leaf.)*

AUSHINARIE. Silently first peruse it ; if 'tis nothing

Unfit for me to know, then I will hear.

NIPUNIKA. It is, oh, it must be that very scandal.

Verses they seem and penned by Urvasie,

And to my master. Manavaka's neglect

Has thrown it in our hands (*Laughs.*)

AUSHINARIE. Tell me the purport.

NIPUNIKA. I'll read the whole. "My master and my King !

Were I what thy heart thinks and knows me not,

Scorning thy love, would then the soft-winged breeze

Of deathless gardens and unfading flowers

That strew the beds of Paradise, to me

Feel fire !"

AUSHINARIE. So ! by this dainty love-letter

He is enamoured then, and of the nymph.

NIPUNIKA. It's plain enough. (*They enter the arbor.*)

MANAVAKA. What's yonder to the wind

Enslaved, that flutters on the parkside rockery ?

PURURAVAS (*Rising*). Wind of the south, thou darling of the Spring,

Seize rather on the flowery pollen stored  
 By months of fragrance, that gold dust of trees.  
 With this thou mightest perfume all thy wings.  
 How wilt thou profit, snatching from me, O wind,  
 My darling's dear handwriting, like a kiss  
 All love ? When thou didst woo thine Anjana  
 Surely thou knewest lovers' dying hearts  
 Are by a hundred little trifles kept,  
 All slight as this !

NIPUNIKA. See, mistress, see ! A search  
 In progress for the leaf.

AUSHINARIE. Be still.

MANAVAKA. Alas !

I was misled with but a peacock's feather,  
 Faded, a saffron splendor of decay.

PURURAVAS. In every way I am undone.

AUSHINARIE (*Approaching suddenly*). My lord,  
 Be not so passionate ; here is your dear letter.

PURURAVAS (*Confused*). The Queen ! O welcome !

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). I'll come, if 'twere convenient.  
 To tell the truth.

PURURAVAS (*Aside*). What shall I do now, friend,  
 Or say ?

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). Much you will say ! A thief red-handed  
 Caught with his snag !

PURURAVAS (*Aside*). Is this a time for jesting ?  
 (*Aloud*) Madam, it was not this I sought but other,  
 A record of state, a paper that I dropped.

AUSHINARIE. Oh, you do well to hide your happiness.

MANAVAKA. My lady, hurry on His Majesty's dinner.  
 When bile accumulates, dinner does the trick.

AUSHINARIE. A noble consolation for his friend  
 The Brahmin finds ! Heard'st thou, Nipunika ?

MANAVAKA. Why, madam, even a goblin is appeased  
 By dinner.

PURURAVAS. Fool ! by force you'd prove me guilty.

AUSHINARIE. Not yours the guilt my lord ! I am in fault  
 Who force my hated and unwelcome face  
 Upon you. But I go. Nipunika,  
 Attend me. (*She is departing in wrath.*) •

PURURAVAS (*Following her*). Guilty I am. O pardon, pardon !

O look on me more kindly. How can a slave  
Be innocent, when whom he should please is angry ?  
(*He falls at her feet.*)

AUSHINARIE (*Aside*). I am not so weak-minded as to value  
Such hollow penitence. And yet the terror  
Of that remorse I know that I shall feel  
If I spurn his kindness, frightens me—but no !  
(*She goes out with Nipunika and attendants.*)

MANAVAKA. She has rushed off like a torrent full of  
wrath.

Rise, rise ! she's gone.

PURURAVAS (*Rising*). O she did right to spurn me.  
Most dulcet words of lovers, sweetest flatteries,  
When passion is not there, can find no entrance  
To woman's heart ; for she knows well the voice  
Of real love, but these are stones false-colored  
Rejected by the jeweller's practised eye.

MANAVAKA. This is what you should wish ! The eye affected  
Brooks not the flaming of a lamp too near.

PURURAVAS. You much misjudge me. Though my heart's  
gone out

To Urvasie, affection deep I owe  
My Queen. But since she scorned my prostrate wooing,  
I will have patience till her heart repent.

MANAVAKA. Oh, hang your patience ! keep it for home consumption.

Mine's at an end. Have some faint mercy instead  
And save a poor starved Brahmin's life. It's time  
For bath and dinner ! dinner !

PURURAVAS (*Looking upward*). It's noon. The tired  
And heated peacock sinks to chill delight  
Of water in the tree-encircling channel,  
The bee divides a crimson bud and creeps  
Into its womb ; there merged and safe from fire,  
He's lurking. The duck too leaves her blazing pool  
And shelters in cold lilies on the bank,  
And in yon summer-house weary of heat  
The parrot from his cage for water cries. (*They go.*)

## ACT THREE

*(Scene One.—Hermitage of the Saint Bharat in Heaven.  
Galava and Pelava.)*

GALAVA. Pelava, thee the Sage admitted, happier  
Chosen, to that great audience in the house  
Of highest Indra—I meanwhile must watch  
The sacred flame ; inform my absence. Was  
The divine session with the acting pleased ?

PELAVA. Of pleased I know not ; this I well could see  
They sat all lost in that poetic piece  
Of Saraswatie, "Luxmie's Choice"—breathlessly  
Identified themselves with every mood  
But—

GALAVA. Ah, that but ! It opens doors to censure.

PELAVA. Yes, Urvasie was heedless, missed her word.

GALAVA. How ? how ?

PELAVA. She acted Luxmie ; Menaka  
Was Varunie ; who asking, "Sister, see,  
The noble and the beautiful of Heaven,  
And Vishnu and the guardians of the worlds.  
To whom does thy heart go mid all these glories ?"—  
Urvasie should have answered 'Purushottam,'  
But from her lips 'Pururavas' leaped forth.

GALAVA. Our organs are the slaves of fate and doom !  
Was not the great Preceptor angry ?

PELAVA. Yes ;  
He cursed her, but high Indra blessed.

GALAVA. What blessing ?

PELAVA. "Since thou hast wronged my teaching and my fame,  
For thee no place in Heaven"—so frowned the Sage.  
Heaven's monarch marked her when the piece was ended,  
Drooping, her sweet face bowed with shame, and said,  
With gracious brows, "Since thou hast fixed thy heart  
Upon my friend and strong ally in war,  
I will do both a kindness. Go to him  
And love and serve him as thy lord until  
A child is got in thee and he behold  
His offspring's face."

GALAVA. O nobly this became

Indra ; he knows to value mighty hearts.

PELAVA (*Looking at the Sun*). Look, in our talk if we have not transgressed

Our teacher's hour for bathing. Galava,

We should be at his side.

GALAVA. Let us make haste. (*They go out.*)

(*Scene Two.—Outside the palace of Pururavas, beneath the House of Gems. The terrace of the House of Gems with a great staircase leading up to it. The Chamberlain Latavya enters.*)

LATAVYA (*Sighing*). All other men when life is green and strong

Marry and toil and get them wealth, then, ageing,

Their sons assume the burden, they towards rest

Their labored faces turn. But us for ever

Service, a keyless dungeon still renewed,

Wears down ; and hard that service is which keeps

O'er women ward and on their errands runs.

Now Kashi's daughter, careful of her vow,

Commands me, "I have put from me, Latavya,

The obstinacy of offended love

And wooed my husband through Nipunika.

Thou too entreat him." Therefore I linger here

Waiting till the King's greatness swiftly come,

His vesper worship done. It dims apace.

How beautifully twilight sits and dreams

Upon these palace walls ! The peacocks now

Sit on their perches, drowsed with sleep and night,

Like figures hewn in stone. And on the roof

The fluttering pigeons with their pallid wings

Mislead the eye, disguised as rings of smoke

That from the window-ways have floated out

Into the evening. In places flower-bestrewn

The elders of the high seraglio, gentle souls

Of holy manners, set the evening lamps,

Dividing darkness ; flames of auspice burn.

The King ! I hear the sound of many feet ;

Ringed round with torches he appears, his girls

Hold up with young fair arms. O form august

Like Mainak, when as yet the hills had wings,

Moving, and the slim trees along its ridge

Flickered with vermeil shaken blooms. Just here  
I'll wait him, in the pathway of his glance.

(*Enter Pururavas, surrounded by girl attendants carrying  
torches ; with him Manavaka.*)

PURURAVAS (*Aside*). Day passes with some pale attempt at  
calm,

For then work walls the mind from the fierce siege  
Of ever-present passion. But how shall I  
Add movement to the tardy-footed night,  
The long void hours by no distraction winged ?

LATAVYA (*Approaching*). Long live the King ! My lady says,  
"The moon

Tonight in splendor on the House of Jewels  
Rises like a bright face. On the clear terrace,  
My husband by my side, I would await  
With Rohinie, his heavenly fair delight,  
The God's embracings."

PURURAVAS. What the Queen wills, was ever  
My law, Latavya.

LATAVYA. So I'll tell the lady. (*He goes.*)

PURURAVAS. Think you in very truth for her vow's sake  
My lady makes this motion ?

MANAVAKA. Rather I deem  
'Tis her remorse she cloaks with holy vows,  
Atoning thus for a prostration scorned.

PURURAVAS. O true ! the proud and loving hearts of women,  
Who have their prostrate dear ones spurned, repenting  
Are plagued with sweet accusing memories  
Of eyes that ask forgiveness, outstretched hands,  
Half-spoken words and touches on their feet  
That travel to the heart. Precede me then  
To the appointed terrace.

MANAVAKA. Look, my lord,  
The crystal stairs roll upward like bright waves  
On moonlit Ganges ; yonder the terrace sleeps  
Wide-bosomed to the cold and lovely eve.

PURURAVAS. Precede me ; we'll ascend. (*They ascend to the  
terrace.*)

MANAVAKA. The moon is surely  
Upon the verge of rise ; swiftly the east

Empties of darkness, and the horizon seems  
All beautiful and brightening like a face.

PURURAVAS. O aptly said ! Behind the peak of rise  
The hidden moon, pushing black night aside,  
Precedes himself with herald lustres. See !  
The daughter of the imperial East puts back  
The blinding tresses from her eyes, and smiles,  
And takes with undimmed face my soul.

MANAVAKA. Hurrah !

The king of the twice-born has risen all white  
And round and luscious like a ball of sugar.

PURURAVAS (*Smiling*). A glutton's eloquence is ever haunted  
With images of the kitchen. (*Bowing with folded hands*)  
Hail, God that rulest

The inactive night ! O settler with the sun  
For ritual holy, O giver to the Gods  
And blessed fathers dead of nectarous wine,  
O slayer of the vasty glooms of night,  
Whose soul of brightness crowns the Almighty's head,  
O moon, all hail ! accept thy offspring's prayer.

MANAVAKA. Well now, your grandpapa has heard your vows ;  
You'll take it from a Brahmin's mouth, through whom  
Even he may telepath his message. So,  
That's finished. Now sit down and give me a chance  
Of being comfortable.

PURURAVAS (*Sitting down, then looking at his attendants*).  
The moon is risen ;

These torches are a vain reiteration  
Of brightness. Ladies, rest.

ALL. Our lord commands us. (*They go.*)

PURURAVAS. It is not long before my lady comes.  
So, let me, while we yet are lonely here,  
Unburden me of my love-ravaged thoughts.

MANAVAKA. They are visible to the blind. Take hope and  
courage

By thinking of her equal love.

PURURAVAS. I do ;

And yet the pain within my heart is great.  
For as a mighty river whose vast speed  
Stumbles within a narrow pass of huge

And rugged boulders, chides his uncouth bed,  
 Increasing at each check, even so does love,  
 His joy of union stinted or deferred,  
 Rebel and wax a hundred-fold in fire.

MANAVAKA. So your love-wasted limbs increase their beauty,  
 They are a sign you soon will clasp your love.

PURURAVAS. O friend, as you my longing heaviness  
 Comfort with hopeful words, my arm too speaks  
 In quick auspicious throbs.

*(He looks with hope up to the sky.)*

MANAVAKA. A Brahmin's word !

*(There enters in the air Chitrlekha with Urvashie in trysting-dress.)*

URVASIE *(Looking at herself)*. Sister, do you think my trysting-dress,

The dark-blue silk and the few ornaments,  
 Becomes me vastly ? Do you not approve it ?

CHITRALEKHA. O inexpressibly ! I have no words  
 To praise it. This I'll say ; it makes me wish  
 I were Pururavas.

URVASIE. Since Love himself  
 Inspires you, bring me quickly to the dwelling  
 Of that high beautiful face.

CHITRALEKHA. Look, we draw near  
 Your lover's house lifts in stupendous mass,  
 As it were mountain Coilas, to the clouds.

URVASIE. Look, sister, with the eye of Gods and know  
 Where is that robber of my heart and what  
 His occupation ?

CHITRALEKHA *(Aside, with a smile)*. I will jest with her.  
*(Aloud)* I see him. He, in a sweet region made  
 For love and joy, possesses with desire  
 The body and the bosom of his love.

URVASIE *(Despairingly)*. Happy that woman, whosoe'er she  
 be !

CHITRALEKHA. Why, sweet, faint-hearted fool, in whom but  
 thee

Should his thoughts joy ?

URVASIE *(With a sigh of relief)*. Alas, my heart perverse  
 Will doubt.



CHITRALEKHA. Here on the terraced House of Gems  
The King is with his friend sole-sitting. Then,  
We may approach. (*They descend.*)

PURURAVAS. O friend, the widening night  
And pangs of love keep pace in their increase.

URVASIE. Sister, my heart is torn with apprehension  
Of what his words might mean. Let us, ourselves  
Invisible, hear their unfettered converse  
My fears might then have rest.

CHITRALEKHA. Good.

MANAVAKA. Take the moonbeams  
Whose pregnant nectar comforts burning limbs

PURURAVAS. But my affliction's not remediable  
With such faint medicines. Neither smoothest flowers,  
Moonlight, nor sandal visiting every limb,  
Nor necklaces of cool delightful pearl,  
Only Heaven's nymph can perfectly expel  
With bliss, or else—

URVASIE (*Clutching at her bosom with her hand*) O me ! who  
else ? who else ?

PURURAVAS. Speech secret full of her unedged my pang—

URVASIE. Heart that left me to flutter in his hands,  
Now art thou for that rashness recompensed !

MANAVAKA. Yes, I too when I cannot get sweet venison  
And hunger for it, often beguile my belly  
With celebrating all its savoury joys.

PURURAVAS. Your belly-loves, good friend, are always with  
you

And ready to your gulp.

MANAVAKA. You too shall soon  
Possess your love.

PURURAVAS. My friend, I have a strange feeling.

CHITRALEKHA. Harken, insatiable, exacting, harken,  
And be convinced !

MANAVAKA. What feeling ?

PURURAVAS. This I feel,  
As if this shoulder by her shoulder pressed  
In the car's shock bore all my sum of being,  
And all this frame besides were only weight  
Cumbering the impatient earth.

CHITRALEKHA. Yet you delay !

URVASIE (*Suddenly approaching Pururavas*). O me ! sister !

CHITRALEKHA. What is it now ?

URVASIE. I am

Before him, and he does not care !

CHITRALEKHA (*Smiling*). O thou,

All passionate unreasoning haste ! Thou hast not

Put off as yet invisibility.

VOICE (*Within*). This way, my lady. (*All listen, Urvsie and Chitralekha are despondent.*)

MANAVAKA (*In dismay*). Hey ? The Queen is here ?

Keep watch upon your tongue.

PURURAVAS. You first discharge

Your face of conscious guilt.

URVASIE. Sister, what now ?

CHITRALEKHA. Be calm. We are unseen. This princess looks

As for a vow arrayed, nor long, if so,

Will tarry. (*As she speaks, the Queen and Nipunika enter with attendants carrying offerings.*)

AUSHINARIE. How does yonder spotted moon

Flush with new beauty, O Nipunika,

At Rohinie's embracings.

NIPUNIKA. So too with you,

Lady, my lord looks fairer than himself.

MANAVAKA. The Queen, my lord, looks very sweet and gracious,

Either because I know she 'l give me sweatmeats

Or 'tis a sign of anger quite renounced,

And from your memory to exile her harshness

She makes her vow an instrument.

PURURAVAS. Good reasons both ;

(*Smiling*) Yet to my humble judgment the poor second

Has likelier hue. For she is gracious white

Is clad and sylvanly adorned with flowers,

Her raven tresses spangled with young green

Of sacred grass. All her fair body looks

Gentle and kind, its pomp and pride renounced

For lovely meekness to her lord.

AUSHINARIE (*Approaching*). My husband !

ATTENDANT. Hail to our master

MANAVAKA. Peace attend my lady.

PURURAVAS. Welcome. (*He takes her hand and draws her down on a seat.*)

URVASIE. By right this lady bears the style  
Of Goddess and of Empress, since no whit  
Her noble majesty of fairness yields  
To Heaven's Queen.

CHITRALEKHA. O bravely said, my sister !  
'Twas worthy of a soul where jealous baseness  
Ought never harbor.

AUSHINARIE. I have a vow, my lord,  
Which at my husband's feet must be absolved.  
Bear with me that I trouble you one moment.

PURURAVAS. No, no, it is not trouble, but a kindness.

MANAVAKA. The good trouble that brings me sweetmeats! often,  
O often may such trouble vex my belly.

PURURAVAS. What vow is this you would absolve, my own ?  
(*Aushinarie looks at Nipunika.*)

NIPUNIKA. 'Tis that women perform to win back kindness  
In eyes of one held dear.

PURURAVAS. If this be so,  
Vainly hast thou these tender flower-soft limbs  
Afflicted with a vow's austerities,  
Beloved. Thou suest for favor to thy servant,  
Propitiatest who for thy propitiated  
All-loving glance is hungry.

URVASIE. Greatly he loves her !

CHITRALEKHA. Why, silly one, whose heart is gone astraying,  
Redoubles words of kindness to his wife.  
Do you not know so much ?

AUSHINARIE (*Smiling*). Not vain my vow,  
That to such words of love has moved already  
My husband.

MANAVAKA. Stop, my lord, a word well spoken  
Is spoiled by any answer.

AUSHINARIE. Girls, the offering  
With which I must adore this gentle moonlight  
That dreams upon our terrace !

NIPUNIKA. Here, my lady,  
Are flowers, here costly scents, all needed things.

AUSHINARIE. Give them to me. (*She worships the moonbeams with flowers and perfumes.*)

Nipunika, present

The sweetmeats of the offering to the Brahmin.

NIPUNIKA. I will, my lady. Noble Manavaka,

Here is for you.

MANAVAKA. Blessings attend thee. May

Thy vow bear fruit nor end.

AUSHINARIE. Now, dear my lord,

Pray you, draw nearer to me.

PURURAVAS. Behold me, love !

What must I do ? (*Aushinarie worships the King, then bowing down with folded hands.*)

AUSHINARIE. I, Aushinarie, call

The divine wife and husband, Rohinie

And Mrigalanchhan named the spotted moon,

To witness here my vowed obedient love

To my dear lord. Henceforth whatever woman

My lord shall love and she desire him too,

I will embrace her and as a sister love,

Nor think of jealousy.

URVASIE. I know not wholly

Her drift, and yet her words have made me feel

All pure and full of noble trust.

CHITRALEKHA. Be content,

Your love will prove all bliss ; surely it must

When blessed and sanctioned by this pure, devoted

And noble creature.

MANAVAKA (*Aside*). When from 'twixt his hands

Fish leaps, cries me the disappointed fisher,

"Go, trout, I spare you. This will be put down

To my account in Heaven." (*Aloud*) No more but this

You love my friend, your husband, lady ?

AUSHINARIE. Dull fool !

I with the death of my own happiness

Would give my husband ease. From this consider

How dearly I love him.

PURURAVAS. Since thou hast power on me

To give me to another or to keep

Thy slave, I have no right to plead. And yet

I am not as thou thinkest me, all lost,  
O thou too jealous, to thy love

AUSHINARIE. My lord.

We will not talk of that. I have fulfilled  
My rite, and with observance earned your kindness.  
Girls, let us go.

PURURAVAS. Is thus my kindness earned ?

I am not kind, not pleased, if now, beloved,  
Thou shun and leave me.

AUSHINARIE. Pardon, my lord. I never

Have yet transgressed the rigor of a vow.  
(*Excunt Queen, Nipunika and attendants.*)

URVASIE. Wife-lover, uxorious is this King, and yet  
I cannot lure my heart away from him.

CHITRALEKHA. Why, what new trick of wilful passion's this ?

PURURAVAS (*Sitting down*). The Queen is not far off.

MĀNAVAKA. Never heed that,

Speak boldly. She has given you up as hopeless.  
So doctors leave a patient, when disease  
Defies all remedy, to his own sweet guidance.

PURURAVAS. O that my Urvasie—

URVASIE. Today might win  
Her own dear wish.

PURURAVAS. From her invisible feet

The lovely sound of anklets on my ear  
Would tinkle, or coming stealing from behind  
Blind both my eyes with her soft little hands  
Like two cool lotuses upon them fallen :  
Or, oh, most sweet ! descending on this roof  
Shaken with dear delicious terrors, lingering  
And hanging back, be by her sister drawn  
With tender violence, faltering step by step,  
Till she lay panting on my knees.

CHITRALEKHA. Go, sister,  
And satisfy his wish.

URVASIE. Must I ? well then,

I'll pluck up heart and play with him a little.  
(*She becomes visible, steals behind the King and covers  
his eyes with her hands. Chitralekha puts off her veil of  
invisibility and makes a sign to Manavaka.*)

MANAVAKA. Now say, friend, who is this ?

PURURAVAS. The hands of beauty.

'Tis that Narayan-born whose limbs are sweetness.

MANAVAKA. How can you guess ?

PURURAVAS. What is there here to guess ?

My heart tells me. The lily of the night

Needs not to guess it is the moon's cool touch.

She starts not to the sunbeam. 'Tis so with me.

No other woman could but she alone

Heal with her little hands all my sick pining.

*(Urvasie removes her hands and rises to her feet ; then  
moves a step or two away.)*

URVASIE. Conquest attend my lord !

PURURAVAS. Welcome, O beauty.

*(He draws her down beside him.)*

CHITRALEKHA. Happiness to my brother !

PURURAVAS. Here it sits

Beside me.

URVASIE. Because the Queen has given you to me,

Therefore I dare to take into my arms

Your body like a lover. You shall not think me

Forward.

MANAVAKA. What, set the sun to you on this terrace ?

PURURAVAS. O love, if thou my body dost embrace

As scizable, a large s from my Queen,

But whose permission didst thou ask, when thou

Stolest my heart away ?

CHITRALEKHA. Brother, she is

Abashed and has no answer. Therefore a moment

Turn to me, grant me one entreaty.

PURURAVAS. Speak.

CHITRALEKHA. When spring is vanished and the torried heat

Thickens, I must attend the glorious Sun.

Do thou so act that this my Urvasie

Left lonely with thee, shall not miss her Heaven.

MANAVAKA. Why, what is there in Heaven to pine for ? There

You do not eat, you do not drink, only

Stare like so many fishes in a row

With wide unblinking eyes.

PURURAVAS. The joys of Heaven

No thought can even outline. Who then shall make  
 The soul forget which thence has fallen ? Of this  
 Be sure, fair girl, Pururavas is only  
 Thy sister's slave : no other woman shares  
 That rule nor can share.

CHITRALEKHA. Brother, this is kind.

Be brave, my Urvasie, and let me go.

URVASIE (*Embracing Chित्रलेखा, pathetically*). Chित्रलेखा,  
 my sister, do not forget me !

CHITRALEKHA (*With a smile*). Of thee I should entreat that  
 mercy, who

Hast got they love's embrace. (*She bows down to the King  
 and goes.*)

MANAVAKA. Now nobly, sir,

Are you increased with bliss and your desire's  
 Accrual.

PURURAVAS. You say well. This is my increase ;  
 Who have felt not half so blest when I acquired  
 The universal sceptre of the world  
 And sovran footstool touched by jewelled heads  
 Of tributary monarchs, as today  
 I feel most happy who have won the right  
 To touch two little feet and am allowed  
 To be thy slave and do thy lovely bidding.

URVASIE. I have not words to make a sweeter answer.

PURURAVAS. How does the winning of one loved augment  
 Sweet contradictions ! These are the very rays  
 Of moonlight burned me late, and now they soothe ;  
 Love's wounding shafts caress the heart like flowers,  
 Thou being with me ; all natural sights and sounds.  
 Once rude and hurtful, now caressing come  
 Softly, because of thee in my embrace.

URVASIE. I am to blame that I deprived my lord  
 So long.

PURURAVAS. Beloved and beautiful, not so !  
 For happiness arising after pain  
 Tastes therefore sweeter, as the shady tree  
 To one perplexed with heat and dust affords  
 A keener taste of Paradise.

MANAVAKA. We have courted

For a long hour the whole delightfulness  
Of moonlight in the evening. It is time  
To seek repose.

PURURAVAS. Guide therefore this fair friend  
The way her feet must henceforth tread.

MANAVAKA. This way.

PURURAVAS. O love, I have but one wish left.

URVASIE. What wish, my lord ?

PURURAVAS. When I had not embraced thee, my desire,  
One night in passing seemed a hundred nights ;  
O now if darkness would extend my joys  
To equal length of real hours with this  
Sweet face upon my bosom, I were blest. (*They go.*)

## ACT FOUR

(*Scene One.—The sky near the doors of the sunrise ;  
clouds everywhere. Chitrlekha and Sahajanya.*)

SAHAJANYA. Dear Chitrlekha, like a fading flower  
The beauty of thy face all marred reveals  
Sorrow of heart. Tell me thy melancholy ;  
I would be sad with thee.

CHITRALEKHA (*Sorrowfully*). O Sahajanya !  
Sister, by rule of our vicissitude,  
I serving at the feet of the great Sun  
Was troubled at heart for want of Urvasie.

SAHAJANYA. I know your mutual passion of sisterliness.  
What after ?

CHITRALEKHA. I had heard no news of her  
So many days. Then I collected vision  
Divine into myself to know of her.  
O miserable knowledge !

SAHAJANYA. Sister, sister !  
What knowledge of sorrow ?

CHITRALEKHA (*Still sorrowfully*). I saw that Urvasie  
Taking with her Pururavas and love—  
For he had on his ministers imposed



His heavy yoke of kingship—went to sport  
Amorously in Gandhamadan green.

SAHAJANYA (*Proudly*). O love is joy indeed, when in such spots  
Tasted. And there ?

CHITRALEKHA. And there upon the strands  
Of heavenly Ganges, one, a lovely child  
Of spirits musical, Udayavatie,  
Was playing, making little forts of sand ;  
On her with all his soul the monarch gazed.  
This angered Urvasie.

SAHAJANYA. O natural !  
Deep passion always is intolerant.  
Afterwards ?

CHITRALEKHA. She pushed aside her pleading husband,  
Perplexed by the Preceptor's curse forgot  
The War-God's vow and entered in that grove  
Avoidable of women ; but no sooner  
Had trod its green, most suddenly she was  
A creeper rooted in that fatal verge.

SAHAJANYA (*In a voice of grief*). Now do I know that Fate's  
indeed a thing

Inexorable, spares no one, when such love  
Has such an ending ; O all too suddenly !  
How must it be then with Pururavas ?

CHITRALEKHA. All day and night he passions in that grove  
Seeking her. And this cool advent of cloud  
That turns even happy hearts to yearning pain,  
Will surely kill him.

SAHAJANYA. Sister, not long can grief  
Have privilege over such beautiful beings.  
Some God will surely pity them, some cause  
Unite once more. (*Looking towards the east*). Come,  
sister, our lord the Sun  
Is rising in the east. Quick, to our service. (*They go.*)

(*Scene Two.—Pururavas enters disordered, his eyes  
fixed on the sky.*)

PURURAVAS (*Angrily*). Halt, ruffian halt ! Thou in thy giant  
arms

Bearest away my Urvasie ! He has  
 Soared up from a great crag into the sky  
 And wars me, hurling downward bitter rain  
 Of arrows. With this thunderbolt I smite thee.  
*(He lifts up a clod and runs as to hurl it ; then pauses  
 and looks upwards.)*

*(Pathetically)* Oh me, I am deceived ! This was a cloud  
 Equipped for rain, no proud and lustful fiend,  
 The rainbow, not a weapon drawn to kill,  
 Quick-driving showers are these, not sleety rain  
 Of arrows ; and that brilliant line like streak  
 Of gold upon a touchstone, cloud-inarmed,  
 I saw, was lightning, not my Urvasie.  
*(Sorrowfully)* Where shall I find her now ? Where clasp  
 those thighs  
 Swelling and smooth and white ? Perhaps she stands  
 Invisible to me by heavenly power,  
 All sullen ? But her anger was ever swift  
 And ended soon. Perhaps into her Heavens  
 She has soared ? O no ! her heart was soft with love,  
 And love of me. Nor any fiend adverse  
 To Heaven had so much strength as to hale her hence  
 While I looked on. Yet is she gone from me  
 Invisible, swiftly invisible—  
 Whither ? O bitter miracle ! and yet—

*(He scans each horizon, then pauses and sighs.)*  
 Alas ! when fortune turns against a man,  
 Then sorrow treads on sorrow. There was already  
 This separation from my love, and hard  
 Enough to bear ; and now the pleasant days,  
 Guiltless of heat, with advent cool of rain  
 Must help to slay me. *(Laughing)* Why do I so tamely  
 Accept addition to my pangs ? For even  
 The saints confess "The king controls the seasons ;"  
 If it be so I will command the thunder  
 Back to his stable. *(Pausing to think)* No, I must permit  
 The season unabridged of pomp ; the signs  
 Of storm are now my only majesty ;  
 This sky with lightning gilt and laced becomes  
 My canopy of splendor and the trees

Of rain-time waving wide their lavish bloom  
 Fan me ; the sapphire-throated peacocks voiced  
 Sweeter for that divorce from heat, are grown  
 My poets ; the mountains are my citizens,  
 They pour out all their streams to swell my greatness.  
 But I waste time in idly boasting vain  
 Glories and lose my love. To my task to my task !  
 This grove, this grove should find her. (*He moves onward.*)  
 And here, O here

Is something to enrage my resolution.  
 Red-tinged, expanding wet and full of rain,  
 These blossom-cups recall to me her eyes  
 Brimming with angry tears. How shall I trace her,  
 Or what thing tell me "Here and here she wandered ?"  
 If she had touched with her beloved feet  
 The rain-drenched forest-sands, there were a line  
 Of little gracious footprints seen, with lac  
 Envermeilled, sinking deeper towards the heel  
 Because o'erburdened by her hips' large glories. (*He moves onward.*)

(*Exultantly*) Oh joy ! I see a hint of her. This way  
 Then went her angry beauty ! Lo, her bodice  
 Bright green as is a parrot's belly, smitten  
 With crimson drops. It once veiled in her bosom  
 And paused to show her navel deep as love.  
 These are her tears that from those angry eyes  
 Went trickling, stealing scarlet from her lips  
 To spangle all this green. Doubtless her heaving  
 Tumult of breasts broke its dear hold and, she  
 Stumbling in anger, from my heaven it drifted.  
 I'll gather it to my kisses. (*He stoops to it, then sorrowfully*)  
 O my heart !

Only green grass with dragon-wings enamelled !  
 From whom shall I in all the desolate forest  
 Have tidings of her, or what creature help me ?  
 Lo, in yon waste of crags the peacock ! he  
 Upon a cool moist rock that breathes of rain  
 Exults, aspires, his gorgeous mass of plumes  
 Seized, blown and scattered by the roaring gusts.  
 Pregnant of shrillness is his outstretched throat,

His look is with the clouds. Him I will question :  
 Have the bright corners of thine eyes beheld,  
 O sapphire-throated bird, her, my delight,  
 My wife, my passion, my sweet grief ? Yielding  
 No answer, he begins his gorgeous dance.  
 Why should he be so glad of my heart's woe ?  
 I know thee, peacock. Since my cruel loss  
 Thy plumes that stream in splendor on the wind  
 Have not one rival left. For when her heavy  
 Dark wave of tresses over all the bed  
 In softness wide magnificently collapsed  
 On her smooth shoulders massing purple glory  
 And bright with flowers, she passioning in my arms,  
 Who then was ravished with thy brilliant plumes,  
 Vain bird ? I question thee not, heartless thing,  
 That joyest in others' pain. (*Turning away*) Lo, where,  
 new-fired  
 With sweet bird-passion by the season cool,  
 A cuckoo on the plum-tree sits. This race  
 Is wisest of the families of birds  
 And learned in love. I'll greet him like himself.  
 O cuckoo, thou art called the bird of love,  
 His sweet ambassador, O cuckoo. Thou  
 Criest and thy delightful voice within  
 The hearts of lovers like an arrow comes,  
 Seeks out the anger there and softly kills.  
 Me also, cuckoo, to my darling bring  
 Or her to me. What saidst thou ? "How could she  
 Desert thee loving ?" Cuckoo, I will tell thee.  
 Yes, she was angry. Yet I know I never  
 Gave her least cause. But, cuckoo, dost thou know not  
 That women love to feel their sovereignty  
 Over their lovers, nor transgression need  
 To be angry ? How ! Dost thou break off, O bird,  
 Our converse thus abruptly and turn away  
 To thine own tasks ? Alas, 'twas wisely said  
 That men bear easily the bitter griefs  
 Which others feel. For all my misery  
 This bird, my orison disregarding, turns  
 To attack the plum-tree's ripening fruit as one

Drunken with love his darling's mouth. And yet  
 I cannot be angry with him. Has he not  
 The voice of Urvasie ? Abide, O bird,  
 In bliss, though I unhappy hence depart.

*(He walks on, then stops short and listens.)*

O Heaven ? what do I hear ? the anklets' cry  
 That tell the musical footing of my love ?  
 To right of this long grove 'twas heard. Oh, I  
 Will run to her. *(Hurrying forward)* Me miserable ! This  
 was

No anklets' cry embraceable with hands,  
 But moan of swans who seeing the grey wet sky  
 Grow passionate for Himaloy's distant tarns.  
 Well, be it so. But ere in far desire  
 They leap up from this pool, I well might learn  
 Tidings from them of Urvasie. *(Approaching)* Listen,  
 O king of all white fowl that waters breed.  
 Afterwards to Himaloy wing thy way,  
 But now the lotus fibres in thy beak  
 Gathered by thee for provender resign ;  
 Ere long thou shalt resume them. Me, ah, first  
 From anguish rescue, O majestic swan,  
 With tidings of my sweet ; always high souls  
 Prefer another's good to selfish aims.  
 Thou lookest upward to the Heavens and sayest,  
 "I was absorbed with thoughts of Himaloy ;  
 Her have I not observed." O swan, thou liest,  
 For if she never trod upon thy lake's  
 Embankment, nor thou sawest her arched brows,  
 How couldst thou copy then so perfectly  
 Her footing full of amorous delight,  
 Or whence didst steal it ? Give me back my love,  
 Thou robber ! Thou hast got her gait and this  
 Is law that he with whom a part is found  
 Must to the claimant realise the whole. *(Laughing)*  
 O yes, thou flyest up, clanging alarm  
 "This is the king whose duty is to punish  
 All thieves like me !" Go then, but I will plunge  
 Into new hopeful places, seeking love.  
 Lo, wild-drake with his mate, famed chocrobacque,

Him let me question. O thou wondrous creature,  
 All saffron and vermillion ! Wilt thou then  
 Not tell me of my love ? Oh, sawest thou not  
 My Goddess laughing like a lovely child  
 In the bright house of spring ? For, wild-drake, thou  
 Who gettest from the chariot's orb thy name,  
 I who deprived am of her orb'd hips  
 The chariot-warrior great Pururavas,  
 Encompassed with a thousand armed desires,  
 Question thee. How ! "Who ? Who ? thou sayest to me ?  
 This is too much. It is not possible  
 He should not know me ! Bird, I am a king  
 Of kings, and grandson to the Sun and Moon,  
 And earth has chosen me for her master. This  
 Were little. I am loved of Urvasie !  
 Still art thou silent ? I will taunt him, then  
 Perhaps he'll speak. Thou, wild-drake, when thy love,  
 Her body hidden by a lotus-leaf,  
 Lurks near thee in the pool, deemest her far  
 And wailest musically to the flowers  
 A wild deep dirge. Such is thy conjugal  
 Yearning, thy terror such of even a little  
 Division from her nearness. Me afflicted,  
 Me so forlorn thou art averse to bless  
 With just a little tidings of my love !  
 Alas, my miserable lot has made  
 All creatures adverse to me. Let me plunge  
 Into the deeper wood. Oh no, not yet !  
 This lotus with the honey-bees inside  
 Making melodious murmur, keeps me. I  
 Remember her soft mouth when I have kissed it  
 Too cruelly, sobbing exquisite complaint.  
 These too I will implore. Alas, what use ?  
 They will despise me like the others. Yet,  
 Lest I repent hereafter of my silence,  
 I'll speak to him. O lotus-wooing bee,  
 Tell me some rumor of those eyes like wine.  
 But no, thou hast not seen that wonder. Else  
 Wouldst thou, O bee, affect the lotus' bloom,  
 If thou hadst caught the sweetness from her lips.

Breathing, whose scent intoxicates the breeze ?  
 I'll leave him. Lo ! with his mate an elephant.  
 His trunk surrounds a nym-tree to uproot.  
 To him will I, he may some rumor have  
 Or whisper of my love. But softly ! Haste  
 Will ruin me. Oh, this is not the time !  
 Now his beloved mate has in her trunk  
 Just found him broken branches odorous  
 And sweet as wine with the fresh leaves not long  
 In bud, new-honied. These let him enjoy.  
 His meal is over now. I may approach  
 And ask him. O rut-dripping elephant,  
 Sole monarch of the herd, has not that moon  
 With jasmines all a glory in her hair  
 And limbs of fadeless beauty, carrying  
 Youth like a banner, whom to see is bliss,  
 Is madness, fallen in thy far ken, O king ?  
 O joy ! he trumpets loud and soft as who  
 Would tell me he has seen indeed my love.  
 Oh, I am gladdened ! More to thee I stand  
 Attracted, elephant, as like with like.  
 Sovereign of sovereigns is my title, thou  
 Art monarch of the kingly elephants,  
 And this wide freedom of thy fragrant rut  
 Interminable imitates my own  
 Vast liberality to suppliant men,  
 Regally ; thou hast in all the herd this mate,  
 I among loveliest women Urvasie.  
 In all things are thou like me ; only I pray,  
 Or friend, that thou mayst never know the pang,  
 The loss. Be fortunate, king, farewell ! Oh, see,  
 The mountain of the Fragrant Glens appears,  
 Fair as a dream, with his great plateaus trod  
 By heavenly feet of women. May it not be,  
 To this wide vale she too has with her sisters  
 Brought here her beautiful body full of spring ?  
 Darkness ! I cannot see her. Yet by these gleams  
 Of lightning I may study, I may find.  
 Ah God ! the fruit of guilt is bounded not  
 With the doer's anguish ; this stupendous cloud

Is widowed of the lightning through my sin.  
 Yet I will leave thee not, O thou huge pile  
 Of scaling crags, unquestioned. Hear me, answer me !  
 O mountain, has she entered then the woods,  
 Love's green estate—ah, she too utter love !  
 Her breasts were large like thine, with small  
 sweet space

Between them, and like thine her glorious hips  
 And smooth fair joints a rapture.

Dumb ? No answer ?

I am too far away, he has not heard me.  
 Let me draw nearer. Mountain, seen was she,  
 A woman all bereaved, her every limb  
 A loveliness, in these delightful woods ?

CHO. Nearer, O nearer ! Mountain-seen was she,  
 A woman all bereaved, her every limb  
 A loveliness, in these delightful woods.

URURAVAS. He has answered, answered ! O my heart, I draw  
 Nearer to her ! In my own words the hill  
 Answers thee, O my heart. As joyous tidings  
 Mayst thou too hear, mountain. She then was seen,  
 My Urvsie in thy delightful woods ?

ECHO. Mountain ! mountain ! mountain ! She then was seen,  
 My Urvsie in thy delightful woods,  
 In thy delightful woods, delightful woods.

PURURAVAS. Alas ! 'tis Echo mocks me with my voice  
 Rolling amid the crags and mountain glens.  
 Out on thee, Echo ! Thou hast killed my heart.  
 O Urvsie ! Urvsie ! Urvsie ! (*He falls down and swoons ;  
 recovering*)

I am all weary and sad. Oh, let me rest  
 Beside this mountain river for a moment  
 And woo the breeze that dances on the waves.  
 All turbid is this stream with violent rain,  
 And yet I thrill to see it. For, O, it seems  
 Just like my angry darling when she went  
 Frowning—as this does with its little waves—  
 A wrathful music in her girdle—and see !  
 This string of birds with frightened clangor rise ;  
 She trailed her raiment as the river its foam,



For it loosened with her passion as she moved  
 With devious feet, all angry, blind with tears,  
 And often stopped to brood upon her wrongs :  
 But soon indignantly her stormy speed  
 Resumed, so tripping, winding goes the stream,  
 As she did. O most certainly 'tis she,  
 My sweet quick-tempered darling, suddenly changed  
 Into a river's form. I will beseech her  
 And soothe her wounded spirit. Urvasie ?  
 Did I not love thee perfectly ? Did not  
 My speech grow sweetness when I spoke to thee ?  
 And when did my heart anything but hate  
 To false our love ? O what was the slight fault  
 Thou foundest in thy servant that thou couldst  
 Desert him, Urvasie, O Urvasie !  
 She answers not ! It is not she, merely  
 A river. Urvasie would not have left  
 Pururavas to tryst with Ocean. And now  
 Since only by refusal to despair  
 Can bliss at last be won, I will return  
 Where first she fled from my pursuing eyes.  
 This couching stag shall give me tidings of her,  
 Who looks as if he were a splendid glance  
 Some dark-eyed Dryad had let fall to admire  
 This budding foliage and this young green beauty  
 Of grass. But why averts he then his head  
 As though in loathing ? I perceive his reason.  
 Lo, his fair hind is hastening towards him stayed  
 By their young deerling plucking at her teats.  
 With her his eyes are solely, her with bent  
 Lithe neck he watches. Ho, thou lord of hind !  
 Sawst thou not her I love ? O stag, I'll tell thee  
 How thou shouldst know her. Like thine own dear hind  
 She had large eyes and loving, and like hers  
 That gaze was beauty. Why does he neglect  
 My words and only gaze towards his love ?  
 All prosperous creatures slight the unfortunate !  
 'Tis natural. Then elsewhere let me seek.  
 I have found her, I have found her ! O a hint  
 And token of her way ! This one red drop

Of summer's blood the very codome was,  
 Though rough with faulty stamens, yet thought worthy  
 To crown her hair. And thou, asoka red,  
 Didst watch my slender-waisted when she gave  
 So cruelly a loving heart to pain.  
 Why didst thou lie and shake thy windy head ?  
 How couldst thou by her soft foot being untouched  
 Break out into such bloom of petals stung  
 And torn by jostling crowds of bees, who swarm  
 All wild to have thy honey ? Ever be blest,  
 Thou noble trunk. What should this be, bright red,  
 That blazes in a crevice of the rocks ?  
 For if it were a piece of antelope's flesh  
 Torn by a lion, 'twould not have this blaze,  
 This lustre haloing it ; nor can it be  
 A spark of pregnant fire ; for all the wood  
 Is drowned in rain. No, 'tis a gem a miracle  
 Of crimson, like the red felicitous flower,  
 And with one radiant finger of the sun  
 Laid on it like a claim. Yet I will take it,  
 For it compels my soul with scarlet longing.  
 Wherefore ? She on whose head it should have burned,  
 Whose hair all fragrant with the coral-bloom  
 I loved like Heaven, is lost to me, beyond  
 Recovery lost to me. Why should I take it  
 To mar it with my tears ?

A VOICE. Reject it not,

My son ; this is the jewe<sup>l</sup> Union born  
 From the red lac that on the marvellous feet  
 Was brilliant of Himaloy's child, and, soon,  
 Who bears it is united with his love.

PURURAVAS. Who speaks to me ? It is a saint who dwells  
 In forest like the deer. He first of creatures  
 Has pitied me. O my lord anchoret,  
 I thank thee. Thou, O Union, if thou end  
 My separation, if with that small-waisted  
 Thou shouldst indeed be proved my Union,  
 Jewel, I'll use thee for my crown, as Shiva  
 Upon his forehead wears the crescent moon.  
 This flowerless creeper ! Wherefore do mine eyes

Dwell with its barren grace and my heart yearn  
 Towards it ? And yet, O, not without a cause  
 Has she enchanted me. There standst thou, creeper,  
 All slender, thy poor sad leaves are moist with rain,  
 Thou silent, with no voice of honey-bees  
 Upon thy drooping boughs ; as from thy lord  
 The season separated, leaving off  
 Thy habit of bloom. Why, I might think I saw  
 My passionate darling sitting penitent  
 With tear-stained face and body unadorned,  
 Thinking in silence how she spurned my love.  
 I will embrace thee, creeper, for thou art  
 Too like my love. Urvasie ! all my body  
 Is thrilled and satisfied of Urvasie !  
 I feel, I feel her living limbs. (*Despairingly*) But how  
 Should I believe it ? Everything I deem  
 A somewhat of my love, next moment turns  
 To other. Therefore since by touch at least  
 I find my dear one, I will not separate  
 Too suddenly mine eyes from sleep. (*Opening his eyes  
 slowly*) O love,  
 'Tis thou ! (*He swoons*)

URVASIE. Upraise thy heart, my King, my liege !

PURURAVAS. Dearest, at last I live ! O thou hadst plunged me  
 Into a dark abyss of separation,  
 And fortunately art thou returned to me,  
 Like consciousness given back to one long dead.

URVASIE. With inward senses I have watched and felt  
 Thy whole long agony.

PURURAVAS. With inward senses ?  
 I understand thee not.

URVASIE. I will tell all.

But let my lord excuse my grievous fault,  
 Who, wretch enslaved by anger, brought to this  
 My sovereign ! Smile on me and pardon me !

PURURAVAS. Never speak of it. Thy clasp is thy forgiveness.  
 For all my outward senses and my soul  
 Leap laughing towards thy bosom. Only convince me  
 How thou couldst live without me such an age.

URVASIE. Harken, The War-God Skanda, from of old

Virginity eternal vowing, came  
 To Gandhamadan's bank men call the pure,  
 And made a law.

PURURAVAS. What law, beloved ?

URVASIE. This,

That any woman entering these precincts  
 Becomes at once a creeper. And for limit  
 Of the great curse, "Without the jewel born  
 From crimson of my mother's feet can she  
 Never be woman more." Now I, my lord,  
 My heart perplexed by the Preceptor's curse,  
 Forgot the War-God's oath and entered here,  
 Rejecting thy entreaties, to the wood  
 Avoidable of women : at the first step,  
 All suddenly my form was changed. I was  
 A creeper growing at the wood's wild end

PURURAVAS. Oh, how intelligible ! When from thy breasts •

Loosening the whole embrace, the long delight,  
 I sank back languid, thou wouldst moan for me  
 Like one divided far. How is it then  
 Possible that thou shouldst bear patiently  
 Real distance between us ? Lo, this jewel,  
 As in thy story, gave thee to my arms.  
 Admonished by a hermit sage I kept it.

URVASIE. The jewel ! Union ! Therefore at thy embrace

I was restored. (*She places the jewel gratefully upon her head.*)

PURURAVAS. Thus stand a while. O fairest,

Thy face, suffused with crimson from this gem  
 Above thee pouring wide its fire and splendor,  
 Has all the beauty of a lotus reddening  
 In early sunlight.

URVASIE. O sweet of speech ! remember

That thy high capital awaits thee long.  
 It may be that the people blame me. Let us,  
 My own dear lord, return.

PURURAVAS. Let us return.

URVASIE. What wafture will my sovereign choose ?

PURURAVAS. O waft me

Nearer the sun and make a cloud our chariot,

While lightning like a streaming banner floats  
 Now seen, now lost to vision, and the rainbow  
 With freshness of its glory iridescent  
 Edges us. In thine arms uplift and waft me,  
 Beloved, through the wide and liquid air. (*They go.*)

## ACT FIVE

(*Scene.—Outside the King's tents near Pratisthana. In the background the confluence of the river Ganges and Yamuna, Manavaka alone.*)

MANAVAKA. After long pleasuring with Urvasie  
 In Nandan and all the woodlands of the Gods,  
 Our King's at last returned, and he has entered  
 His city, by the jubilant people met  
 With splendid greetings, and resumed his toils.  
 Ah, were he but a father, nothing now  
 Were wanting to his fullness. This high day  
 At confluence of great Ganges with the stream  
 Dark Yamuna, he and his Queen have bathed.  
 Just now he passed into his tent, and surely  
 His girls adorn him. I will go exact  
 My first share of the ointments and the flowers.

MAID (*Within lamenting*). O me unfortunate! the jewel is  
 lost

Accustomed to the noble head of her  
 Most intimate with the bosom of the King,  
 His loveliest playmate. I was carrying it  
 In palm-leaf basket on white cloth of silk ;  
 A vulture doubting this some piece of flesh  
 Swoops down and soars away with it.

MANAVAKA. Unfortunate !

This was the Union, the crest-jewel, dear  
 O'er all things to the King. Look where he comes  
 His dress half-worn just as he started up  
 On hearing of his loss. I'll go to him.

(*He goes. Then Pururavas enters with his Amazons*)

*of the Bactrian Guard, and other attendants in great excitement.)*

PURURAVAS. Huntress ! huntress ! Where is that robber bird  
That snatches his own death ? He practises  
His first bold pillage in the watchman's house.

HUNTRESS. Yonder, the golden thread within his beak !  
Trailing the jewel how he wheels the air  
Describing scarlet lines upon the sky !

PURURAVAS. I see him, dangling down the thread of gold  
He wheels and dips in rapid circles vast.  
The jewel like a whirling firebrand red  
Goes round and round and with vermilion rings  
Incarnadines the air. What shall we do  
To rescue it ?

MANAVAKA (*Coming up*). Why do you hesitate to slay him ?  
He is marked out for death, a criminal.

PURURAVAS. My bow ! my bow !

AN AMAZON. I run to bring it ! (*She goes out.*)

PURURAVAS. Friend,

I cannot see the bird. Where has it fled ?

MANAVAKA. Look ! to the southern far horizon wings  
The carrion-eating robber.

PURURAVAS (*Turns and looks*). Yes, I see him.  
He speeds with the red jewel every way  
Branching and shooting light, as 'twere a cluster  
Of crimson roses in the southern sky  
Or ruby pendant from the lobe of Heaven.

(*Enter Amazon with the bow.*)

AMAZON. Sire, I have brought the bow and leathern guard.

PURURAVAS. Too late you bring it. Yon eater of raw flesh  
Goes winging far beyond an arrow's range,  
And the bright jewel with the distant bird  
Blazes like Mars the planet glaring red  
Against a wild torn piece of cloud. Who's there ?  
Noble Latavya !

LATAVYA. Highness ?

PURURAVAS. From me command  
The chief of police, at evening, when  
Yon winged outlaw seeks his homing tree,  
That he be hunted out.

LATAVYA. It shall be done. (*He goes out.*)

MANAVAKA. Sit down and rest. What place in all broad earth  
This jewel-thief can hide in, shall elude  
Your world-wide jurisdiction ?

PURURAVAS (*Sitting down with Manavaka*). It was not as a gem  
Of lustre that I treasured yonder stone,  
Now lost in the bird's beak, but 'twas my Union  
And it united me with my dear love.

MANAVAKA. I know it, from your own lips heard the tale.  
(*Chamberlain enters with the jewel and an arrow.*)

LATAVYA. Behold shot through that robber ! Though he  
fled,

Thy anger darting in pursuit has slain him,  
Plumb down he fell with fluttering wings from Heaven  
' And dropped the jewel bright. (*All look at it in surprise.*)  
Ill fate o'ertaking

' Much worse offence ! My lord, shall not this gem  
Be washed in water pure and given—to whom ?

PURURAVAS. Huntress, go, see it purified in fire,  
Then to its case restore it.

HUNTRESS. As the King wills. (*She goes out with the jewel.*)

PURURAVAS. Noble Latavya, came you not to know  
The owner of this arrow ?

LATAVYA. Letters there are  
Carved on the steel ; my eyes grow old and feeble,  
I could not read them.

PURURAVAS. Therefore give me the arrow.

I will spell out the writing. (*The Chamberlain gives him  
the arrow and he reads.*)

LATAVYA. And I will fill my office. (*He goes out.*)

MANAVAKA (*Seeing the King lost in thought*). What do you  
read there ?

PURURAVAS. Hear, Manavaka, hear  
The letters of this bowman's name.

MANAVAKA. I'm all  
Attention ; read.

PURURAVAS. O harken then and wonder. (*Reading*)  
"Ayus, the smiter of his foemen's lives,  
The warrior Ilian's son by Urvasie,  
This arrow loosed."

MANAVAKA (*With satisfaction*). Hail, King ! now dost thou prosper,

Who hast a son.

PURURAVAS. How should this be ? Except

By the great ritual once, never was I

Parted from that beloved ; nor have I witnessed

One sign of pregnancy. How could my Goddess

Have borne a son ? True, I remember once

For certain days her paps were dark and stained,

And all her fair complexion to the hue

Of that wan creeper paled, and languid-large

Her eyes were. Nothing more.

MANAVAKA. Do not affect

With mortal attributes the living Gods.

For holiness is as a veil to them

Concealing their affections.

PURURAVAS. This is true.

But why should she conceal her motherhood ?

MANAVAKA. Plainly, she thought, "If the King sees me old

And matron, he'll be off with some young hussy."

PURURAVAS. No mockery, think it over.

MANAVAKA. Who shall guess

The riddles of the Gods ? (*Enter Latavya*)

LATAVYA. Hail to the King !

A holy dame from Chyavan's hermitage

Leading a boy would see my lord.

PURURAVAS. Latavya,

Admit them instantly.

LATAVYA. As the King wills.

(*He goes out, then re-enters with Ayus' bow in hand and  
a hermitess.*)

Come, holy lady, to the King. (*They approach the King.*)

MANAVAKA. How say you,

Should not this noble boy be very he,

The young and high-born archer with whose name

Was lettered yon half-moon of steel that pierced

The vulture ? His features imitate my lord's.

PURURAVAS. It must be so. The moment that I saw him

My eyes became a mist of tears, my spirit

Lightened with joy, and surely 'twas a father



That stirred within my bosom. O Heaven ! I lose  
Religious calm ; shudderings surprise me ; I long  
To feel him with my limbs, pressed with my love.

LATAVYA (*To the hermitess*). Here deign to stand.

PURURAVAS. Mother, I bow to thee.

SATYAVATIE. High-natured may thy line by thee increase !

(*Aside*) Lo, all untold this father knows his son.

(*Aloud*) My child,

Bow down to thy begetter. (*Ayus bows down, folding his hands over his bow.*)

PURURAVAS. Live long, dear son.

AYUS (*Aside*). O how must children on their father's knees

Grown great be melted with a filial sweetness

When only hearing that this is my father

I feel I love him !

PURURAVAS. Vouchsafe me, revered lady,

Thy need of coming.

SATYAVATIE. Listen then, O King ;

This Ayus at his birth was in my hand

By Urvasie, I know not why, delivered,

A dear deposit. Every perfect rite

And holiness unmaimed that princely boys

Must grow through, Chyavan's self, the mighty Sage,

Performed, and taught him letters, Scripture, arts—

Last, every warlike science.

PURURAVAS. O fortunate

In such a teacher !

SATYAVATIE. The children fared afield

Today for flowers, dry fuel, sacred grass,

And Ayus faring with them violated

The morals of the hermitage.

PURURAVAS (*In alarm*). O how ?

SATYAVATIE. A vulture with a jag of flesh was merging

Into a tree-top when the boy levelled

His arrow at the bird.

PURURAVAS (*Anxiously*). And then ?

SATYAVATIE. And then

The holy Sage, instructed of that slaughter,

Called me and bade, "Give back thy youthful trust

Into his mother's keeping." Therefore, sir,

Let me have audience with the lady.

PURURAVAS. Mother,

Deign to sit down one moment. (*The hermitess takes the seat brought for her.*)

Noble Latavya,

Let Urvasie be summoned.

LATAVYA. It is done. (*He goes out.*)

PURURAVAS. Child of thy mother, come, O come to me !

Let me feel my son ! The touch of his own child,

They say, thrills all the father ; let me know it.

Gladden me as the moonbeam melts the moonstone.

SATYAVATIE. Go, child, and gratify thy father's heart. (*Ayus goes to the King and clasps his feet.*)

PURURAVAS (*Embracing the boy and seating him on his footstool*).

This Brahmin is thy father's friend. Salute him,

And have no fear.

MANAVAKA. Why should he fear ? I think

He grew up in the woods and must have seen

A mort of monkeys in the trees.

AYUS (*Smiling*). Hail, father.

MANAVAKA. Peace and prosperity walk with thee ever. (*Latavya returns with Urvasie.*)

LATAVYA. This way, my lady.

URVASIE. Who is this quivered youth

Set on the footstool of the King ? Himself

My monarch binds his curls into a crest !

Who should this be so highly favored ? (*Seeing Satyavatie*)

Ah !

Satyavatie beside him tells me ; it is

My Ayus. How he has grown !

PURURAVAS (*Seeing Urvasie*). O child, look up.

Lo, she who bore thee, with her whole rapt gaze

Grown mother, her veiled bosom heaving towards thee

And wet with sacred milk !

SATYAVATIE. Rise, son, and greet

Thy parent. (*She goes with the boy to Urvasie.*)

URVASIE. I touch thy feet.

SATYAVATIE. Ever be near

Thy husband's heart.

AYUS. Mother, I bow to thee.

URVASIE. Child, be thy sire's delight. My lord and husband !

PURURAVAS. O welcome to the mother ! sit thee here. (*He makes her sit beside him.*)

SATYAVATIE. My daughter, lo, thine Ayus. He has learned  
All lore, Heroic armor now can wear.

I yield thee back before thy husband's eyes  
Thy sacred trust. Discharge me. Each idle moment  
Is a religious duty left undone.

URVASIE. It is so long since I beheld you, mother,  
I have not satisfied my thirst of you,  
And cannot let you go. And yet 'twere wrong  
To keep you. Therefore go for further meeting.

PURURAVAS. Say to the Sage, I fall down at his feet.

SATYAVATIE. 'Tis well.

AYUS. Are you going to the forest, mother ?  
Will you not take me with you ?

PURURAVAS. Over, son,  
Thy studies in the woods. Thou must be now  
A man, know the great world.

SATYAVATIE. Child, hear thy father

AYUS. Then, mother, let me have when he has got  
His plumes, my little peacock, Jewel-crest,  
Who'd sleep upon my lap and let me stroke  
His crest and pet him.

SATYAVATIE. Surely, I will send him.

URVASIE. Mother, I touch thy feet.

PURURAVAS. I bow to thee,  
Mother.

SATYAVATIE. Peace be upon you both, my children. (*She goes*)

PURURAVAS. O blessed lady ! Now I am grown through thee  
A glorious father in this boy, our son ;  
Not Indra, hurler down of cities, more  
In his Jayanta of Paulomie born. (*Urvsie weeps.*)

MANAVAKA. Why is my lady suddenly all tears ?

PURURAVAS. My own beloved ! How art thou full of tears  
While I am swayed with the great joy of princes  
Who see their line secured ? Why do these drops  
On these high peaks of beauty raining down,  
O sad sweet prodigal, turn thy bright necklace

To repetition vain of costlier pearls ? (*He wipes the tears from her eyes.*)

URVASIE. Alas, my lord ! I had forgot my doom  
In a mother's joy. But now thy utterance  
Of that great name of Indra brings to me  
Cruel remembrance torturing the heart  
Of my sad limit.

PURURAVAS. Tell me, my love, what limit ?

URVASIE. O King, my heart held captive in thy hands,  
I stood bewildered by the curse ; then Indra  
Uttered his high command : "When my great soldier,  
Earth's monarch, sees the face that keeps his line  
Made in thy womb, to Eden thou returnest."  
So when I knew my issue, sick with terror,  
Of being torn from thee, all hidden haste.  
I gave to noble Satyavatie the child,  
In Chyavan's forest to be trained. Today  
This my beloved son returns to me ;  
No doubt she thought that he was grown and able  
To gratify his father's heart. This then  
Is the last hour of that sweet life with thee,  
Which goes not farther. (*Pururavas swoons.*)

MANAVAKA. Help, help !

URVASIE. Return to me, my King !

PURURAVAS (*Reviving*). O love, how jealous are the Gods in  
Heaven

Of human gladness ! I was comforted  
With getting of a son—at once this blow !  
O small sweet waist, I am divorced from thee !  
So has a poplar from one equal cloud  
Received the shower that cooled and fire of Heaven  
That kills it.

MANAVAKA. O sudden evil out of good !

For I suppose you now will don the bark  
And live with hermit trees.

URVASIE. I too unhappy !

For now my King, who sees that I no sooner  
Behold my son reared up than to my Heavens  
I soar, will think that I have all my need  
And go with glad heart from his side.

PURURAVAS. Beloved,

Do not believe it. How can one be free  
To do his will who's subject to a master ?  
He when he's bid must cast his heart aside  
And dwell in exile from the face he loves.  
Therefore obey King Indra. On this thy son  
I too my kingdom will repose and dwell  
In forests where the antlered peoples roam.

AYUS. My father should not on an untrained steer  
Impose the yoke that asks a neck of iron.

PURURAVAS. Child, say not so ! The ichorous elephant  
Not yet full-grown tames all the trumpeting  
Of older rivals ; and the young snake's tooth  
With energy of virulent poison stored  
Strikes deadly. So is it with the ruler born :  
His boyish hand inarms the sceptred world.  
The force that rises with its task springs not  
From years, but is a self and inborn greatness.  
Therefore, Latavya !

LATAVYA. Let my lord command me.

PURURAVAS. Direct from me the council to make ready  
The coronation of my son.

LATAVYA (*Sorrowfully*). It is

Your will, sire. (*He goes out. Suddenly all act as if dazzled.*)

PURURAVAS. What lightning leaps from cloudless Heavens ?

URVASIE (*Gazing up*). 'Tis the Lord Natad.

PURURAVAS. Narad ? Yes, 'tis he.

His hair is matted all a tawny yellow  
Like ochre-streaks, his holy thread is white  
And brilliant like a digit of the moon.  
He looks as if the faery-tree of Heaven  
Came moving, shooting twigs all gold, and twinkling  
Pearl splendors for its leaves, its tendrils pearl.

Guest-offering for the Sage ! (*Narad enters ; all rise to greet him.*)

URVASIE. Here is guest-offering.

NARAD. Hail, the great guardian of the middle world !

PURURAVAS. Greeting, Lord Narad.

URVASIE. Lord, I bow to thee.

NARAD. Undivided live in sweetness conjugal.

PURURAVAS (*Aside*). O that it might be so ! (*Aloud to Ayus*)  
 Child, greet the Sage.

AYUS. Urvaseian Ayus bows down to thee.

NARAD. Live long, be prosperous.

PURURAVAS. Deign to take this seat.

(*Narad sits, after which all take their seats.*)

What brings the holy Narad ?

NARAD. Hear the message

Of mighty Indra.

PURURAVAS. I listen.

NARAD. Maghavan,

Whose soul can see across the world, to thee

Intending loneliness in woods—

PURURAVAS. Command me.

NARAD. The seers to whom the present, past and future

Are three wide-open pictures, these divulge

Advent of battle and the near uprise

Of Titans warring against Gods. Heaven needs

Thee, her great soldier ; thou shouldst not lay down

Thy warlike arms. All thy allotted days

This Urvaseie is given thee for wife

And lovely helpmeet.

URVASIE. Oh, a sword is taken

Out of my heart.

PURURAVAS. In all I am Indra's servant.

NARAD. 'Tis fitting. Thou for Indra, he for thee,

With interchange of lordly offices.

So sun illumines the fire, fire the great sun

Ekes out with heat and puissance. (*He looks up into the sky.*)

Rambha, descend

And with thee bring the high investiture

Heaven's King has furnished to crown Ayus, heir

Of great Pururavas. (*Apsaras enter with articles of investiture.*)

NYMPHS. Lo ! Holiness,

That store !

NARAD. Set down the boy upon the chair.

Of the anointing.

RAMBHA. Come to me, my child. (*She seats the boy.*)

NARAD. (*Pouring the cruse of holy oil on the boy's head*).

Complete the ritual.

RAMBHA (*After so doing*). Bow before the Sage,

My child, and touch thy parents' feet. (*Ayus obeys.*)

NARAD. Be happy.

PURURAVAS. Son, be a hero and thy line's upholder.

URVASIE. Son, please thy father.

BARDS (*Within*). Victory to Empire's heir !

### *Strophe*

First, the immortal seer of Brahma's kind  
And had the soul of Brahma ; Atri's then  
The Moon his child ; and from the Moon again  
Sprang Buddha-Hermes, moonlike was his mind.  
Pururavas was Buddha's son and had  
Like starry brightness. Be in thee displayed  
Thy father's kindly gifts. All things that bless  
Mortals, descend in thy surpassing race.

### *Antistrophe*

Thy father like Himaloy highest stands  
Of all the high, but thou all steadfast be,  
Unchangeable and grandiose like the sea,  
Fearless, surrounding Earth with godlike hands.  
Let Empire by division brighter shine ;  
For so the sacred Ganges snow and pine  
Favors, yet the same waters she divides  
To Ocean and his vast and heaving tides.

NYMPHS (*Approaching Urvasie*). O thou art blest, our sister,  
in thy son

Crowned heir to Empire, in thy husband blest  
From whom thou shalt not part.

URVASIE. My happiness

Is common to you all, sweet sisters : such  
Our love was always. (*She takes Ayus by the hand.*) Come  
with me, dear child,

To fall down at thy elder mother's feet.

PURURAVAS. Stay yet ; we all attend you to the Queen.

NARAD. Thy son's great coronation mindeth me

Of yet another proud investiture—

Kartikeya crowned by Maghavan, to lead  
Heaven's armies.

PURURAVAS. Highly has the King of Heaven  
Favored him, Narad ; how should he not be  
Most great and fortunate ?

NARAD. What more shall Indra do  
For King Pururavas ?

PURURAVAS. Heaven's King being pleased,  
What further can I need ? Yet this I'll ask.  
*(He comes forward and speaks towards the audience.)*  
Learning and Fortune, Goddesses that stand  
In endless opposition, dwellers rare  
Under one roof, in kindly union join  
To bless for glory and for ease the good.  
This too : may every man find his own good,  
And every man be merry of his mind,  
And all men in all lands taste all desire.





BHAVABHUTI

*Rama's Later History*

TRANSLATED BY

C. N. JOSHI

## INTRODUCTION

BHAVABHUTI, the most celebrated dramatist following Kalidasa, practiced his art at approximately 700 A. D., or some three centuries after his famous predecessor. Broadly speaking, their works follow a similar pattern. Each is author of three known plays and in each instance two are of heroic or epic spirit, namely Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and *Vikramorvasie*, and Bhavabhuti's *History of Rama*, and *Rama's Later History*—to give the two English titles generally employed, though necessarily, it seems, rendered with some awkwardness. Each author composed one less ambitious play of a more specifically amoristic temper, namely, Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra*, and Bhavabhuti's *Malati and Madhava*. The difference in time, however, operates perceptibly both in the history of the two men and in the character of their works. Bhavabhuti himself appears a little less a myth than Kalidasa, slightly more recognizable as an historic personality. The opening passage of *Malati and Madhava* informs us that he comes from a family residing in the province of Vidarbha, in central India, and that this ancient family was known for its piety, learning, and devotion to the Brahmin practice of religion. He asserts his knowledge of grammar, rhetoric and logic, and declares that he has studied the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Samkhya*, and the *Yoga*. His mother, he writes, was "Jatukarni, a poet familiar through friendship with actors." His plays may be thought occasionally to bear evidence of these circumstances.

From various passages in them his perceptive critic, Shripad Krishna Belvalkar, infers that he was of an idealistic nature, especially devoted to a lofty conception of the family, and that life presented him with considerable struggles. Certainly his plays lack the sense of radiant well-being so notable in Kalidasa's. In the Induction already referred to he remarks of his public: "How little do they know who speak of us with censure! This entertainment is not for them. Possibly some one exists, or will exist, of similar tastes with myself; for time is boundless, and the world is wide." Nervous tension and unrest may well be detected beneath the splendid exterior of

his dramatic poetry. His style is strained with prodigiously long compound words and other marks of effort and self-consciousness. His dialogue also has touches of moving colloquialism. There can be no doubt that the plays received elegant performances at court festivals and at an early date were held in a repute which has never been wholly lost. They glow with fervor and high seriousness.

In *Malati and Madhava* both feeling and style may occasionally be exaggerated to the degree of speciousness and action suspended perilously close to the melodramatic. Spectacular and supernatural episodes, with strong choreographic values, in some respects analogous to the witch-scenes in *Macbeth*, add their horrors to the lurid action. Life is not all the pleasure-garden of the play's earlier passages. A young girl is rescued from the attack of an escaped tiger. A fiend snatches the heroine away, to be sought desperately by the hero among vast, snowy mountains. Several times the chief characters shudder on the verge of suicide. Black magic torments them until white magic saves them. Their humanity wars continually against their dark destiny. Romantic friendship is celebrated almost as fervently as romantic love. However this play is estimated, it can hardly be overlooked ; its emphatic brilliance ensured its considerable and lasting success in the theatre.

Although a nostalgic spirit overshadows the heroics of Bhavabhuti's two massive and important plays based on the *Ramayana*, they must be regarded as the major efforts of the Indian stage to dramatize the episodes of the most beloved of Indian epics, the source for scores of lesser works. These two impressive dramas thus appear a little past full ripeness, the product of a jaded age for which simpler statements were felt inadequate or outmoded and the richest of seasoning was in every respect desired.

*The History of Rama*, presumably the earlier work of the two, is the less sophisticated in its art and the more typical embodiment of epic style, highly charged with its expression of the pride of life, the straining of the will, cruelty, violence, war. As a picture of the earlier years of Rama's life it affords the natural introduction to the quite different and obviously more mature drama selected for this book, *Rama's Later History*. Unhappily, in the eyes of most readers in the twentieth

century the first work in particular must seem heavily loaded with mythological allusions and with a vast pageant of figures now strange though once familiar. Several important strands are bound together with the result that the knot is by no means lightly untied. Rama engages in his feud with Ravana. The defeat of the demon Tadaka provides merely an early episode, foreshadowing the future course of events. Rama alone bends Siva's bow, thus winning Sita as his wife. Paracurama proves a formidable and loquacious antagonist, overcome only after long struggle. His episode belongs to the endless war between the savage forces of darkness and the noble Kshatriyas. The story passes next to Rama's injury at the hand of queen Kaikeyi, the evil step-mother and favorite wife of the aged king, Dacaratha. Taking advantage of an oath by the king, she causes the banishment of Rama, who is accompanied by his bride, Sita, and his devoted younger brother, Lakshmana. The monarch dies in grief. Bharata, a half-brother, whom Kaikeyi favors above Rama as heir to the throne, behaves with the utmost generosity. But many bridges must be crossed before even a pause in the struggles can be won.

Having decoyed Rama in the pursuit of a golden deer, conjured by magic, the remorseless Ravana captures Sita and abducts her to his fortified city, Lanka. Vali, favorable to Ravana's party, offers resistance that Rama removes only with his destruction. Vali's brother, Sugriva, however, aids Rama's party. Birds and beasts augment the fray and for the most part aid Rama. The vultures support him, their chief, Jatayu, valiantly dying in Sita's defense. The monkeys prove on the whole loyal to Rama, especially the great monkey leader, Hanuman, who sets Lanka afire. Forces of good and evil are by no means arrayed in mathematical order. Thus Ravana's son, Meghanada, dies a hero's death and the many-headed monster himself at times appears almost sympathetic, though his imprisonment of Sita and importunity in wooing her are in no way condoned. With his ultimate fall at Rama's hand at least a truce in the wars of the gods, beasts and men is attained. Sita's chastity having been proved by a fire ordeal, the entire party flies on an aerial journey northward to Rama's capital, where with fitting religious ceremony he is joyfully crowned. Thus concludes *The History of Rama*.

For the first act of *Rama's Later History* this extended narrative constitutes the background and antecedent action. Events are recapitulated with a device at once shrewd and strictly typical of the Sanskrit stage, where poetic narrative and theatrical business appear side by side. The scene in question is called "The Picture Gallery." Remarkably, the passage never becomes merely retrospect nor loses the imminence of theatre. Not only are the stoics repeated, so important for realizing the emotional depth of the scenes to follow ; the attitudes of the chief persons examining the paintings are artfully intimated by their contrasting reactions to the pictures. The second play is thus firmly erected on the foundations of the first. We pass smoothly from the essentially 'epic world of the first drama to the essentially subjective, religious and metaphysical world of the second.

Although its action is far more unified and concentrated than that of the preceding work and based upon but one book of the *Ramayana*, the last, wherever so many figures appear in such complex relationships a brief summary of their story also may be welcome. Even in the first scene, that of "the picture gallery", much occurs to propel the action forward. Rama agrees to confer on Sita's offspring the use and secret of his magic weapons. Since she is already pregnant, the promise comes all the more weighted with significance. But once more she is banished, on this occasion by Rama himself, who considers the harsh move as forced upon him by the will of a populace that doubts her chastity and the efficacy of her earlier trial by fire in Ravana's far-away city.

With much artfulness Bhavabhuti dramatizes a story altogether repellent to classical theories of drama in the Western World. Sita gives birth to twins, Lava and Kusa, in circumstances highly miraculous. In despair at her desertion and in her extreme pain, she throws herself into the Ganges. Shortly thereafter she emerges, supported by the river-goddess, Ganga, bearing one son on her arm, and by the earth-goddess, Prithivi, carrying the other. The two infants are entrusted to the care of the sage, Valmiki, author of the *Ramayana*, and virtually the god of poetry.

Sita now goes to the forest where she and Rama have enjoyed their early years, delighting in nature and sharing the company

of holy hermits. In a violent attack of grief, Rama visits the same holy wood. The third act, one of the most remarkable in Sanskrit drama, depicts their experience in the forest. Sita is by magic invisible. When her husband faints from grief, the touch of her hand twice revives him, though she, of course, remains all the while unseen. Hero and heroine converse with their confidants, though Rama remains ignorant of the presence of any other persons than his own company and believes the voice and touch of his wife to be illusion and dream. A more mysterious or moving fugue in dialogue has never, perhaps, been realized for the stage.

*Rama's Later History* contains even more materials than its predecessor, yet organizes and harmonizes them with a far greater artistic power. In short, there is less of melodrama and more of art. The mood of its earlier acts is primarily pathetic ; much is narrated ; action is largely mental, though much stage business is provided ; in the later acts the movement becomes much more vigorous and the spirit draws at least closer to the epic mood. By celestial journeys, voices offstage, and a hundred conventions of the poetic theatre, Bhavabhuti lures the wildest incidents into the cages of his dramatic art. As the play progresses we note more and more the distinction between the Eastern and the Western stage. Western drama has few passages so subjective as the first half of his play and few passages so extravagantly mobile as the second half. The monster, fantasy, has been tamed by art. The basic theme is the glorification of the family but no work could be further from the tame and literal style of "domestic drama" as practiced in Europe from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Time itself is wholly fluid in the playwright's hands. His characters live at once in reminiscence, present action, and prophetic vision. They inhabit land, air, and water. The story is of gods, demi-gods, angels, birds, beasts, the old, those in the prime of life and the adolescent. For Bhavabhuti there are no limits to the theatre save the art of the theatre. Its universe is a seamless garment.

The episode in Act Four at the hermitage to which Rama's mother and father have retired commences with its focus upon age and concludes with a scene whose centre is taken by childhood. Rama meets his son, Lava, though

neither father nor son knows their relation. The boy, however, knows and reveres the saga of his father, since he has learned it from his preceptor, the poet, Valmiki. In the last three acts the boy's temper and especially his relation to his father is disarmingly imagined. Rama has decreed a "horse-sacrifice," a ritual wherein a steed is released, protected by a royal guard for a year, after which it is solemnly offered up to the deity. Until this moment in the action the boy has never seen a horse. Naturally enough, the animal's beauty excites him. He soon enters into a spirited altercation with its royal protector. Moreover, he is made nobly jealous, or emulous, by the praise which he hears for the horse's owner, the king, Rama. A battle ensues, during which Lava releases the divine missiles bestowed upon him by his father's prayer in the first act. Rama's ceremonial entry on the embattled scene immediately pacifies his audacious son, who has been jealous only of Rama's fame but immediately bows to the majesty of his person.

The dazzling finale employs a convention, the play-within-the-play, used profusely by dramatists in countries far younger than India and far removed from it, as by Shakespeare and Pirandello. A play is presented summarizing Sita's adventures during her separation, as related in the last book of Valmiki's poem, the only book unknown to Lava and his brother, Kusa. (As Bhavabhuti seems to have known, this book was actually a late addition to the great epic.) The episodes depict the birth of Sita's twin sons. Rama is so passionately involved in the presentation that he is once more confused regarding reality and illusion. His emotions overcome him. The boys, on the contrary, view the scenes with childlike coolness. For the third time Sita's touch restores Rama to consciousness. Valmiki assures him that the two youths are his sons. The conclusion provides a spectacle at last uniting gods and mortals, heaven and earth, fiction and reality. Sita is honoured by all as pure and sacred as a goddess. Rama's sacred dynasty is established. Divine harmony overcomes all discord.

In the eyes of some Indian scholars *Rama's Later History* surpasses even *Shakuntala*. That it has, on the whole, enjoyed less wide acclaim may be owing in part to its extreme complexity, making it by no means easy to grasp at a single reading



and almost impossible to project upon a stage not created for such subtle and elaborate art. By the side of its colossal polyphony *Shakuntala* appears pure and simple harmony. Moreover, Bhavabhuti's lush rhetoric undoubtedly erects some obstruction to foreign readers and probably to its recent readers in India itself. In translation, where Bhavabhuti's compound words, stretching dragon-like at times across an entire page, are analyzed and taken apart in phrases, one formidable difficulty, at least, is removed. The translation printed in this volume is fruit of a valiant effort to combine both the rhetoric and the occasional colloquialism of the original, and the occasional use of a biblical idiom seems appropriate when it is considered that the Indian poet regarded the *Ramayana*, which he follows so devotedly, as both an ancient and a sacred text. The play itself is a truly great work which may never rival *Shakuntala* in fame but, despite all its mannerisms, at least seriously challenges the more graceful work in substantial merit.

# *Rama's Later History*

## *Persons in the Play*

RAMA, king of Ayodhya

KUSA, his elder son

LAVA, his younger son

LAKSHMANA, his brother

CHANDRAKETU, son of Lakshmana

VALMIKI, a holy sage, author of the *Ramayana*, and preceptor  
of Kusa and Lava

JANAKA, father of Sita, formerly king of Mithula, now leading  
an ascetic life

SAMBUKA, an ascetic, appearing in his spiritual character

ASHTAVAKRA, an ascetic

SUMANTRA, charioteer of Chandraketu

DURMUKHA, emissary employed by Rama

SAUDHATAKI, pupil of Valmiki

DANDAYANA, pupil of Valmiki

A VIDYADHARA, male spirit of air

SITA, wife of Rama

ARUNDHATI, wife of the sage Vasishtha and guardian of Sita

ATREYI, wife of the sage Atri

KAUSALYA, mother of Rama

VASANTI, guardian spirit of the forest of Janasthana

TAMASA, a river goddess

MURALA, a river goddess

A VIDHYADHAN, female spirit of air

GANGA (*Bhagirathi*), goddess of the Ganges

PRITHIVI, goddess of the Earth

## ACT ONE

*The Picture Gallery*

BENEDICTION. Having made an obeisance to former poets, we pray for this, that we may obtain the immortal goddess Speech, who is a phase of the Supreme Soul.

MANAGER. Enough of prolixity. I inform the respectable gentlemen assembled today in the festival held in honor of the adorable Kalapriyanatha. Let this be known to your honors. There is a worthy descendent of Kasyapa's race, having the title of Srikantha by way of distinction, versed in the sciences of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric Bhavabhuti by name and son of a woman who sprang from the Jatukarnya household, whom, a Brahmana, this goddess of speech follows like an obedient wife. *Rama's Later History*, a play composed by him, will now be presented. Here do I become a sojourner in Ayodhya for some purpose in hand, as well as one living at the time when Rama was crowned. (*Looking around*). How now, sirs? If this is the time of the coronation of the great and respected king Rama, who is the fire destroyer of the family of Paulastya, when the joyful music is not to be discontinued either by day or night, why is it that the public squares are now without the singing of bards? (*Enter an Actor*).

ACTOR. The reason is, honored sir, that the high-souled monkeys and Rakshasas, who were Rama's allies in the war of Lanka, as well as the priestly sages and the royal sages, that had come from various quarters to greet the great king and in whose honor festivities had continued for so many days, have been sent away by him from this place to their homes.

MANAGER. Ah, this must be the reason.

ACTOR. Moreover, the queens, the mothers of Rama, headed by Vasishtha and preceded by Arundhati, have gone to the hermitage of their son-in-law in order to be present at a sacrifice.

MANAGER. I am stranger here and so I ask—who is that son-in-law?

ACTOR. The king Dasaratha begot a daughter, by name Santa, whom he gave in adoption to the king Romapada. Rishyas-

ringa, the son of Vidhandaka, espoused her. He has now commenced a sacrifice which will last for twelve years. It is at his request that the elderly persons have gone thither, leaving Janaki, though far advanced in pregnancy.

MANAGER. Then what is the cause of this? Come! Let us wait at the royal gate itself in conformity with the practice of our caste.

ACTOR. If that be so, let your honor find out some very correct mode of panegyric proper for the time of waiting upon the king.

MANAGER. My good actor, we should by all means be doing our duty; whence can there be escape from blame? Men are wicked as regards to the chastity of women and speech.

ACTOR. You should say 'very wicked.' For men speak evil even of the queen, the daughter of Videha's prince. Her residence in the house of the demon Ravana is the root of the scandal but as regards her fire-ordeal there is distrust.

MANAGER. If this scandal were to reach the great king, then it would be very painful.

ACTOR. The sages and the gods will by all means bring about what is good. (*Walking round*). Halloo? where is His Majesty now? (*Listening*) This is what they say. Janaka, who came through affection to congratulate Rama, having spent these days in rejoicing, is today gone to Videha. The king, leaving the judgment seat, enters his residential palace to console the queen who is therefore despondent. (*Exeunt both*.)

*(Here ends the prelude. Enter Rama, seated, and Sita.)*

RAMA. Queen, daughter of the king of Videha, take comfort, for your father cannot leave us. But indeed the necessity of performing the prescribed rites takes away independence. The performance of the duties of a householder by persons who have kindled the sacred fires is beset with obstacles.

SITA. I know it, my lord! I know it. But separations from relations do cause anguish.

RAMA. Just so. For these things of worldly life pierce the vitals of the heart, being disgusted with which, sages desert all objects of desire and seek repose in the forest. (*Enter Chamberlain*).

CHAMBERLAIN. Dear Rama ! (*correcting himself in the middle of his speech, with fear*) Your Majesty !

RAMA (*with a smile*). Surely, my worthy friend, the address, "dear Rama," is just the fitting one for a servant of my father. Address me therefore as has been your wont.

CHAMBERLAIN. Sire, Ashtavakra has arrived from the hermitage of Rishyasringa.

SITA. Sir, why do you delay then ?

RAMA. Send him in at once. (*Exit Chamberlain*).

ASHTAVAKRA (*entering*). Blessing on you both !

RAMA. Revered sir, I salute you. Please sit down here.

SITA. Venerable sir, I bow to you. Are my elders, together with their son-in-law, doing well, as also noble Santa ?

RAMA. Is it all right with the revered Rishyasringa, my brother-in-law and habitual drinker of the Soma sacrifice, and is the noble Santa well ?

SITA. Does she remember us ?

ASHTAVAKRA (*sitting down*). Just so. Queen, the revered Vasishtha, the spiritual guide of your family, sends you this message.

"The revered goddess Earth gave thee birth ; king Janaka, who is equal to Prajapati, is thy father. Thou art the daughter-in-law, my daughter, of those kings of whose family the Sun is the ancestor, and I am the spiritual guide. Then what else can we desire for thee ? Only to be a mother of heroes."

RAMA. We are blessed. For the speech of ordinary good men is in keeping with facts, while facts follow the utterances of primeval sages.

ASHTAVAKRA. Moreover, the revered Arundhati and the queens of Santa repeatedly enjoined this : whatever may be her longing, thou surely oughtest quickly to gratify it.

RAMA. It will be done if she only signify her wish.

ASHTAVAKRA. And Rishyasringa, the husband of her sister-in-law, sends this message to the queen : dear child, thou wast not brought here, because thou art far advanced in pregnancy, and dear Rama also has been left only for thy solace ; therefore I shall behold thee, longlived one, with a son on thy lap.

RAMA (*with a smile of joy and bashfulness*). So let it be. Has not

the revered Vasishtha sent me some command ?

ASHTAVAKRA. Please listen. We are detained here on account of the sacrifice of our son-in-law. You are only a youth and your rule is new ; be you devoted to pleasing your subjects ; the glory arising therefrom is your highest wealth.

RAMA. As the revered Vasishtha commands. Affection, mercy, and happiness, nay, even Janaki, I shall feel no pang in abandoning in order to propitiate the people.

SITA. Hence, indeed, is my lord the foremost of Raghus' race.

RAMA. Ho ! Who waits there ? Let Ashtavakra have rest.

ASHTAVAKRA (*rising and walking about*). Look ! the prince Lakshmana has arrived. (*So saying, exit*).

LAKSHMANA (*entering*). Victory, victory to my noble brother ! Sir, that painter has, according to your instruction, portrayed your Majesty's career on canvas ; let my noble brother look at it.

RAMA. You know, dear brother, how to divert the queen when despondent. How far is my story represented there ?

LAKSHMANA. As far as the purification of the queen by the ordeal of fire.

RAMA. Peace ! (*In a conciliatory tone*). What need has she, who was purified by her birth, of other purifications ? The water of holy places and fire need no purification from other things. Queen, sprung from sacrificial ground, forgive me ! This reproach will last as long as thy life. The cruel world must be pleased by men whose wealth lies in the reputation of their family ; hence what ill I spoke of you does not befit you. The natural place of a sweet flower is settled to be on the head and not being trampled under foot.

SITA. Let it be, my dear lord, let it be. Come, let us see your exploits.

(*With these words she rises and walks about*)

LAKSHMANA. Here is the picture.

SITA. (*observing it*). Who are these standing in compact form above my lord, who seems to praise him ?

LAKSHMANA. Queen ! these are the stupefying weapons accompanied by charms which were handed down from the venerable Krisasva to Visvamitra, and were presented by him to my noble brother on the occasion of the destruction of Tataka.

RAMA. Salute, queen, the divine weapons ! The primeval seers, Brahma and others, having done penance for more than a thousand years for the welfare of the Vedas, had a vision of these weapons as the manifestation of their own glories, the result of penance.

SITA. My homage to these.

RAMA. Assuredly now they shall wait on your sons.

SITA. I am favoured.

LAKSHMANA. Here is the scene at Mithila.

SITA. Oh ! here my lord is represented, distinguished by the beauty of his body, which is muscular, comely, soft, and resplendent and dark like an expanding fresh blue lotus, having his charming grace beheld by my father motionless from wonder, as my lord snapped the bow of Sankara with careless ease. He has a round face, engaging with his looks.

LAKSHMANA. Behold, noble lady, behold ! Here is your father and Santananda, son of Gotama, the family priest of the race of Janaka, honouring the relatives, Vasishtha and others.

RAMA. This is quite proper To whom does not the marriage relation between the families of Raghu and Janaka give pleasure, in which the son of Kusika himself is the giver and receiver ?

SITA. Here are you, the four brothers, duly initiated for matrimonial rites, the auspicious ceremony of tonsure having been just performed. Ah ! I feel I am in that very place, on that very occasion again.

RAMA. Even so. It seems to me to be again that very time, O fair-faced one, when this hand of thine with lovely bracelets put upon it, being joined with mine by the son of Gotama, gladdened me, as if it were a great festival incarnate.

LAKSHMANA. This is the queen. Here is the princess Mandavi, here is the daughter-in-law Srutakirti.

SITA. And, dear brother, who is this other one ?

LAKSHMANA (*with a bashful smile, aside*). Oh ! the queen asks about Urmila, my wife. Good ! I will direct her attention to something else. (*aloud*). Noble lady, see, this is a sight worth seeing. And this is revered Bhargava.

SITA (*with alarm*). I tremble.

RAMA. I salute thee, O sage.

LAKSHMANA. Lady, see, see ; here is he who by my noble brother—(*Interrupting him in the midst*)

RAMA (*rebukingly*). Dear brother, there is much to be seen ; show us other scenes.

SITA (*Looking at him with affection and great regard*). My lord ! This great modesty becomes you well.

LAKSHMANA. Here we are arrived at Ayodhya.

RAMA. (*with tears*). I remember. Ah ! I remember. Then my dear father was alive, we were just married, and we were kindly cared for by our mothers. Gone are those days for us ! This Janaki too then, a child wearing a face the expression of which was engaging because of her bud-like teeth, not very dense, some having fallen off at intervals, and with fine locks dangling about the temples, gave delight to my mothers by her sweet limbs, exceedingly charming, delightful like the moonlight and possessed of natural grace.

LAKSHMANA. Here is Mantlara

RAMA (*quickly passing to another point*). Oh queen, daughter of Videha's king, here is that Ingudi tree, in the city of Sringeribera, where our meeting with the friendly king of Nishadas took place.

LAKSHMANA (*Laughing ; to himself*). Ah, the noble brother has passed over in silence the behavior of the second mother.

SITA. Oh, here is the incident of knotting the hair.

LAKSHMANA. That holy vow of leading a forester's life, which the members of Ikshvaku's race observed in their old age, after devolving royal authority upon their sons, was undertaken by my lord in his youth !

SITA. Here is the venerable Ganga with her limpid and holy water.

RAMA. Goddess ! presiding deity of Raghu's race, I salute thee. It was when touched by thy waters that Bhagiratha, having practised penance, in which physical pain was discarded, delivered the grandfathers of his father long after they had been consumed by the effulgence of Kapila through wrath, when in the sacrifice of Sagara they had cleft open the earth, while busied in searching for the horse. Oh mother ! of such fame, do thou cherish kind thoughts for Sita, thy daughter-in-law, even as Arundhati does. .



LAKSHMANA. Here is the banian tree, Syama by name, on the bank of the Kalindi, by the side of the road leading to Chitrakuta, pointed out to us by Bharadwaja.

RAMA (*Looks at it longingly ; silent*).

SITA. Does my lord remember this region ?

RAMA. Ah ! How can I forget it ? Where thou didst fall asleep, having laid down on my chest thy limbs, though dull on account of the fatigue caused by the tramp on the road, yet attractive because of their natural sportiveness, which were shampooed by my close embraces and which were void of strength like a crushed lotus-fibre.

LAKSHMANA. Here is shown the obstruction caused by Viradha at the entrance of the Vindhya wood.

SITA. No more of this. Let me look at my first entrance into the southern forest, when my lord held over me with his own hand a palm-leaf umbrella to keep off the sun.

RAMA. Here are these penance groves on the banks of the mountain torrents ; the trees are resorted to by hermits, in the groves of which those sages who follow the moral observances and consider hospitality the highest duty, inhabit huts, being householders who cook handfulls of wild rice.

LAKSHMANA. Here is the mountain named Prasravana, situated in the middle of Janasthana, the darkness of which is rendered deeper by the ever drizzling clouds and the ravines of which resound with the river Godavari, encircled by the forest in its vicinity, which is blue, glossy and dense on account of the belt of thickly growing trees.

RAMA. Dost thou remember, lovely lady, the days which we two spent on that mountain, being at ease as Lakshmana waited on us ? Dost thou remember the Godavari with its sweet water and also our walks upon its outskirts ? Moreover, the night itself passed away, its hours flying unnoticed, while we talked at random and in a manner indiscrible, in a soft whisper on account of our great love, our cheeks being laid closely together and one arm of each locked up in a close embrace.

LAKSHMANA. Here is Surpanakha in Panshavati.

SITA. Oh, my lord, this is the last time I see you.

RAMA. You, afraid of separation ! this is a picture.

SITA. Be it what it may ; a wicked person causes unhappiness.

RAMA. Good heavens ! the incidents at Janasthana appear as if they were taking place just now.

LAKSHMANA. Then the wicked Rakshasas resorting to the stratagem of a golden deer acted in such a way that even now it grieves us though avenged. On account of the behavior of my lord in the lonely Janasthana, in which his senses were overpowered, even the stone weeps, even the heart of adamant breaks.

SITA (*with tears, to herself*). O king ! gladdener of Raghu's race, thou wast so much afflicted for my sake.

LAKSHMANA (*Looking meaningly at Rama*). My noble brother, what is this ? These thy tears, like a broken necklace of pearls, roll in streams, creeping along the ground in shattered drops. Though restrained, the emotion, which by its excess fills thy heart, can be inferred by others by the throbbing of the lips and the nose.

RAMA. Dear brother ! the fire of grief which was caused by separation from my beloved, though sharp, was at that time endured through a longing for revenge ; but being now rekindled in my heart, it gives me pain like a wound piercing the vitals of the heart.

SITA. Ah ! ah ! I also through sorrow gone to excess seem to behold myself separated from my lord.

LAKSHMANA (*To herself*) Well, I will turn her attention to some other part. (*Looking at the picture—aloud*) Here is a representation of the exploits and valor of the revered father Jatayu, the vulture-king, as old as one eon.

SITA. Ah father, your fatherly love was carried out to the end.

RAMA. Ah, father, descendant of Kasyapa, king of birds ! Where again can arise a great holy saint like thee ?

LAKSHMANA. This is that part of the Dandaka forest, to the west of Janasthana, called Chitrakunjavan, inhabited by the headless demon Danu. Here is that hermitage of Matanga on the mountain Rishyamuka, and here is that saintly female of the Sabara tribe named Sramana ; this is the lily-pool called Pampa.

SITA. It was here, indeed, that my lord wept aloud, losing his resentment and courage.

RAMA. Queen ! beautiful is this lake. On this lake, in the

intervals between the falling and rising of tears, I beheld the tracts full of white lotuses, which trembled with their broad stalks, being shaken by the wings of the Mallikaksha geese, singing indistinctly through joy, as full of blue lotuses.

LAKSHMANA. Here is the noble Hanuman.

SITA. Here is that magnanimous Maruti, a great benefactor in that he rescued from its grief the whole world of living creatures though the rescue was carried out only after a long time.

RAMA. Happily, it is he of mighty arms, the increaser of the joy of Anjana, by whose prowess we as well as the whole world have attained our ends.

SITA. Dear brother, what is the name of this mountain, on whose flowering Kadamba trees the peacocks are dancing, where, under a tree, my lord is painted with his glory dimmed, all but his beauty and noble mein being gone, and during a momentary fainting fit supported by you who were weeping.

LAKSHMANA. This is that well-known mountain called Malyavan, fragrant with the flowers of the Kakubha trees, on the top of which a fresh cloud is resting, blue and glossy. On this, my lord—

RAMA. Desist, desist from this ; I can endure no more ; that separation from Janaki seems to have returned for me

LAKSHMANA. Hereafter are represented the countless exploits each more wonderful than the other of my noble brother and of the noble monkeys and rakshasas ; but the queen here is tired, so I request that we take a rest.

SITA. My lord, by looking at this picture I have conceived a longing and I have a request to make.

RAMA. Rather command me.

SITA. I wish that I could once more wander in those calm and majestic ranges of the woodland and that I should again bathe in the divine Ganges, a plunge in which is holy, purifying and cool.

RAMA. Dear Lakshmana.

LAKSHMANA. Here I am.

RAMA. The elders have just sent word that her longing should be immediately gratified. Therefore prepare a chariot that does not jolt and moves agreeably.

SITA. My lord, you too should accompany me there.

RAMA. Oh hard-hearted one ! do you need to tell me even this ?

SITA. Then I am pleased.

LAKSHMANA. As my lord commands. (*Exit Lakshmana*).

RAMA. Dear one ! Let us sit here awhile near the window.

SITA. So be it. I am indeed overpowered by drowsiness produced by fatigue.

RAMA. So cling closely to me for accompanying me there, when the chariot shall come. Let there be thrown round my neck, as if reviving me, thy arm covered with drops of perspiration, produced by excitement and fatigue, and so having the splendor of a necklace of moon-jewels, pouring forth dew when kissed by the lunar rays. (*Helping her to do so, with delight*) My dear, what is this ?

I cannot decide whether it is pleasure or pain, or stupor or sleep, or the creeping of poison or intoxication ; for whenever I touch thee, emotion distracting all my senses clouds my mind and shuts it up.

SITA. It is your constant love for me ; what else can it be ?

RAMA. These kind words, lotus-eyed one, that cause the withered flower of my life to bloom again, delight me and fascinate all my senses ; they are like nectar to my ears and the elixir of my mind.

SITA. Sweet speaker, let us lie down for rest. (*Looks about for something to sleep on*).

RAMA. What are you looking about for, my dear ? Ever since the time of my marriage, whether in the house or in the forest, in childhood and after that in youth, this arm of Rama has been thy pillow lulling thee to sleep, and not resorted to by any other woman.

SITA (*Imitating sleep*) It is so, my lord, it is so. (*Sleeps*).

RAMA. What ! has the sweetly speaking one gone to sleep on my chest. (*Gazing upon her*.) She is the prosperity of my house, she is a Collyrium-pencil of ambrosia to my eyes, this touch of hers is to my body abundant juice of sandalwood, her arm on my neck is a string of pearls cool and smooth. What about her would not be pleasing, if—but separation from her is intolerable.

DOORKEEPER (*Entering*). There has come, my lord—

RAMA. Well ! who ?

DOORKEEPER. Durmukha, your Majesty's personal attendant.  
 RAMA (*To himself*). Durmukha, the attendant of the harem !

He was sent by me as a spy among the citizens and the country people. (*Aloud*) Let him enter. (*Exit the Door-keeper.*)

DURMUKHA (*Entering, to himself*). Ah, how can I tell the king such an inconceivable slanderous report of the people against the queen Sita ? Or such is indeed the duty for me, an unfortunate man.

SITA (*Talks in her sleep*). Ah ! my gentle lord ! where art thou ?

RAMA. Ah, it is the same idea of separation suggested by the picture, which is a cause of anxiety to the queen and produces disturbances of her sleep. (*Stroking her body affectionately*) Happy is that lucky man who somehow seeks and finds that unique thing, perfect identity of happiness and misery, favorable in all conditions, where the heart finds its solace, the flavor of which cannot be taken away by old age, which ripens into firm attachment after time has removed the veil of reserve.

DURMUKHA (*Approaching*). Victory to your Majesty !

RAMA. Speak out what you have learnt.

DURMUKHA. The citizens and the country people praise your Majesty saying, 'the good king Rama has made us forget the great king Dasaratha.'

RAMA. This is only praise. But tell me some fault in order that it may be remedied.

DURMUKHA (*with tears*). May your Majesty listen. (*Whispers in his ear*) Something like this.

RAMA. Ah ! terrible is the fall of this thunderbolt of words. (*Faints*).

DURMUKHA. Take heart, my lord.

RAMA (*Coming to himself*). Ah ! ah ! fie upon the stigma of dwelling in another's house, which, though extinguished by miraculous measures with regard to Sita, has again spread in all directions, through the evil working of fortune, like the poison of a mad dog. Then what am I, a wretched man, to do in this matter ? (*Reflecting, pathetically*) Or what else is there to be done ? It is the vow of the good to propitiate the world by any means whatsoever, the vow which my father fulfilled by abandoning me and his life

together. It was also just now that the revered Vasishttha sent me a message to the same effect. Besides, I am a cursed being, if to that noble, unspotted character which was rendered illustrious by the kings of the solar race, the best of men, should attach a foul report on account of my connection with it ! Ah, queen, sprung from sacrificial ground, you who hallowed the earth by condescending to be born from it ! Oh ! thou daughter of the house of Nimi and Janaka ! Oh thou that art endowed with a character approved of by the fire, Vasishttha and Arundhati ! Oh thou whose life is Rama, my dear companion of the great forest ! Oh thou that wast dear to my father ; Oh thou that speakest few words ! How is it that of thee, being such, such is the end ! Through you the worlds are holy ; but unholy are the words of the people with respect to you. In you the world finds a helper, but you will fall a helpless victim ! (*To Durmukha*) Durmukha, say to Lakshmana—This your new king Rama thus commands you (*In his ear*). So.

DURMUKHA. Alas ! how is it that by listening to the mere words of wicked men your Majesty has decided to act so ungenerously towards the queen who was then purified by fire and in whose womb is lodged pure progeny of the race of Raghu ?

RAMA. Peace ! How can the people of the town and the country be wicked ? The race of Ikshvaku is loved by the people ; but unfortunately there has sprung a germ of slander and as for that miracle at the time of her purification, who could believe if it happened at a remote place ? Go then.

DURMUKHA. Alas ! queen ! (*Exit*).

RAMA. Ah ! how sad ! I have become a wicked man, the perpetrator of a very execrable deed. Under a pretext I am handing over to death one whom I have brought up from childhood by giving whatever things she liked, and who has never dwelt apart from me through affection, just as a butcher does a domestic bird. Then why do I, a sinner, not fit to be touched, defile the queen ? (*Slowly raises Sita's head and withdraws his arm.*) Leave me, O innocent one, who am a Chandala, an outcast, by my atrocious deeds. You are clinging to a deadly poisonous tree taking it for a sandal tree. (*Rising*) Ah ! the world of living beings is

now turned upside down ; the purpose of Rama's life is at an end today. The earth is now a sterile withered wilderness ; worldly life is without interest ; the body is full of worry. I have no refuge left. What can I do ? What course is open to me ? Alas, mother, life was put in Rama simply that he should experience pain. My soul is like a nail of adamant driven into the heart piercing it into its vital parts. Oh mother Arundhati, O venerable Vasishtha and Visvamitra, O divine Fire, O goddess, the supporter of all creatures, O father Janaka, O father, O mother, O dear friend Sugriva, O gentle Hanuman, O my great benefactor Bibhishana, lord of Lanka, O friend Trijata, you have been robbed, you have been insulted by cursed Rama. Or who am I to call on them now ? For these high-souled persons are, I think, as it were, polluted with sin when named by me, an ungrateful villain. Having discarded my beloved wife, the ornament of my house, who went to sleep having reclined on my bosom without misgivings and heavy with the developed foetus trembling with fear—I have ruthlessly cast her off like an offering to the beasts of prey. (*Placing the feet of Sita on his head*) Queen ! Queen ! This is the last time that the head of Rama will touch thy lotus-like foot. (*weeps.*)

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Help ! Help !

RAMA. Ho, find what it is ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Harassed by the demon Lavana, the multitude of sages, of austere penance, living on the banks of the Yamuna, has approached thee, the protector.

RAMA. What ! trouble from demons yet ! Let me at once send Satrugna for the destruction of this wicked lord of Madhura, the son of Kumbhinasi. (*Advancing a few steps and then coming back*). Ah ! Queen how will you fare in this condition ? O mother earth, do thou take care of thy very noble daughter Janaki ! that Janaki of pure character, who is the sole blessing of the families of Janaka and Raghu and whom thou broughtest forth in the holy sacrificial ground. (*Exit weeping*).

SITA. O my gentle lord, where are you ? (*Rises hastily*). Oh ! fie, fie. Deluded by an evil dream, I look upon myself as if separated from my lord. (*Looking about*) Alas ! Alas ! My lord has gone away leaving me alone fast asleep ; what

can this be ? Well, I will get angry with him, if I am master of myself when I see him.—Who waits there ? (*Enter Durmukha*).

DURMUKHA. Queen, prince Lakshmana says, the carriage is ready ; your ladyship should mount it.

SITA. Here I mount it. (*Rising and walking forth*). My heavy foetus throbs. Let us go gently.

DURMUKHA. This way, this way, queen.

SITA. A bow to those whose wealth is their penance, the sages ! My homage to the guardian deities of Raghu's race, my veneration to the lotus-feet of my lord ! Reverence to all my elders ! (*Exeunt omnes*).

## ACT TWO

### *Dandaka Revisited*

VOICE (*behind the curtains*). Welcome to her whose wealth is penance. (*Then enter a female ascetic in a travelling dress.*)

FEM. ASCETIC. Ah, here is the goddess of the wood waiting on me at a distance, with an offering of leaves, full of fruits and flowers.

GODDESS (*entering and strewing the offering about*). This wood is to be enjoyed by thee at thy will. This is a blessed day for me ; for the meeting of the good with the good happens with difficulty and by merit ; the shade of the trees, water, and whatever food is suitable for penance whether fruits or roots—all alike is entirely at thy disposal.

FEM. ASCETIC. What shall I say to this ! A conduct full of love, a restraint over speech pleasing on account of its modesty, a mind naturally bent on doing good, a blameless familiarity—this secret of conduct, the savor of which is unaltered either in the beginning or in the end, which is guileless and pure, is ever victorious. (*Both sit down*).

GODDESS. Whom am I to understand you to be ?

FEM. ASCETIC. I am Atreyi.

GODDESS. Noble Atreyi, where do you come from ? Why do you enter the forest of Dandaka ?



ATREYI. In this tract there dwell many who know the Omkara, of whom Agastya is the chief. In order to learn from them the knowledge of the Vedanta, I wander here, having left the side of Valmiki.

GODDESS. When other sages too wait upon that ancient teacher of Brahma, the sage Prachetasa, for a complete study of the Brahma-lore, why dost thou, revered Madame, endure the trouble of a long journey ?

ATREYI. There is a great impediment to study there ; and this is why I have undertaken this long journey.

GODDESS. What sort of impediment ?

ATREYI. Some kind of distinguished divinity presented to that revered sage two boys wonderful in every respect, of an age when they could just have been weaned ; they charm the hearts not only of the sages, but of all creatures, animate and inanimate.

GODDESS. Do you know their names ?

ATREYI. That same divinity declared their names to be Kusa and Lava and revealed their power.

GODDESS. What sort of power ?

ATREYI. They possess, it is said, the Jrimbhaka weapons together with their secret spells from their very birth.

GODDESS. Ha ! that is indeed wonderful.

ATREYI. And the venerable Valmiki having taken charge of them from the duties of a nurse brought them up and looked after them. When their tonsure ceremony was performed he carefully instructed them in the lores, except the three Vedas. Just after that in the eleventh year from conception, he invested them with the sacred thread according to the rite proper to the Kshatriya class, and taught them the three Vedas. There is no possibility of persons like me studying with these two possessing a very brilliant intellect and a strong memory. The teacher imparts knowledge to the clever as well as to the dullard ; but he does not, indeed, give them the talent for learning nor does he take it away ; and so there is a great difference between them in the results ; it happens thus ; a pure jewel is able to take in a reflection ; not so a lump of clay and other things.

GODDESS. Is this the impediment to study to which you referred ?

ATREYI. There is another also.

GODDESS. What is the other ?

ATREYI. Therea'ter once the Brahmana sage went to the river Tamasa for the mid-day bath. There he saw that one of a pair of herons was being shot by a hunter. He then uttered divine speech, of well-regulated composition, which suddenly manifested itself to him and which developed in the form of the Anushtubh metre : "Mayest thou never attain rest O Nishada, through eternal years, inasmuch as, thou slewest one of the pair of herons when it was maddened by love."

GODDESS. Wonderful ! A new advent of metre different from that of the Veda !

ATREYI. Then just at that time, the divine Brahma, the pro-creator of beings, appearing before the revered sage, to whom the light of Brahma in the form of speech had been revealed, said : "Sage, thou art enlightened in the Sabda form of Brahma ; describe, therefore, the life of Rama. Thy prophetic eye of genius will never have its vision obstructed ; thou art the first poet." With these words he vanished then and there. Thereafter the venerable son of Prachetas, Valmiki, composed the history of Ramayana, the first manifestation of Sabdabrahma, or Brahma-in-the-garb-of-words, in the mortal world.

GODDESS. Ah ! then the world has been embellished.

ATREYI. Hence it was that I said that there was a great hinderance to our study.

GODDESS. That is right.

ATREYI. I have rested, friend ; now tell me the way to the hermitage of Agastya.

GODDESS. Leaving this place enter Panchavati, and go along this bank of the Godavari.

ATREYI (*with tears*). Can this be the penance grove ? Can this be Panchavati ? Is this the river Godavari ? Is this the mountain Prasravana ? Art thou Vasanti the goddess of the woods that dwells in Janasthana ?

GODDESS. All that is as you say.

ATREYI. Ah ! child of Janaki. Here is the grove of trees dear to you, coming up in course of conversation. which, being seen, makes you as it were stand before our eyes, though you exist only in name.

VASANTI (*Shuddering, to herself*). What, existing in name, she said ! (*Aloud*) Worthy lady ! what misfortune has befallen the queen Sita ?

ATREYI. Not misfortune only, but with scandal (*whispers into her ear*) thus, thus.

VASANTI. Ah ! what a terrible stroke of fate ! (*so saying swoons*).

ATREYI. Good lady ! take comfort ! take comfort !

VASANTI. Oh dear friend ! Ah, noble lady ! Is such the lot of thy birth ? Oh friend Rama ! or enough of you ! Noble Atreyi, have you any news as to what became of queen Sita after Lakshmana abandoned her and returned from the forest ?

ATREYI. None, none.

VASANTI. Oh misery ! How could this have happened when the family of Raghu was presided over by Arundhati and Vasishtha, and when the old queens were still alive ?

ATREYI. The elderly persons were then at the hermitage of Rishyasringa. The sacrificial session extending over twelve years is now completed and Rishyasringa having honored the elders has dismissed them. Then the revered Arundhati said that she would not go to Ayodhya destitute as it was then of her daughter-in-law. To this the mothers of Rama gave consent. And the revered Vasishtha, in approval of the same, spoke out the pure words that they would go to the hermitage of Valmiki and stay there.

VASANTI. And how is the king engaged at present ?

ATREYI. The king has commenced a horse-sacrifice.

VASANTI. Oh, fie. He has married too ?

ATREYI. Heaven forbid ; no, no.

VASANTI. Who then is his consort in the sacrifice ?

ATREYI. A golden image of Sita.

VASANTI. Ha ! Oh, who can fathom the minds of extraordinarily good persons, which, though harder than adamant, are yet softer than a flower ?

ATREYI. The sacrificial horse consecrated by Vamadeva has been let loose ; and guards have been appointed for it according to sacred rules, and Chandraketu, the son of Lakshmana, who has learned the traditional knowledge of the heavenly missiles, has been sent as their commander,

followed by a force consisting of the four divisions.

VASANTI (*with tears of affection and wonder*). The son too of Prince Lakshmana ! Now, mother, there is life in me.

ATREYI. About this time a Brahmana threw the body of his dead son before the gate of the king's palace and beating his breast cried out, "An outrage upon the Brahmins." Then while the compassionate Rama was considering that he was in fault, as untimely death could not come upon his subjects without the fault of the king, suddenly an aerial voice was heard : "A man of mixed class, Sambuka by name, has been performing a penance on the earth ; his head must be cut off by thee, O Rama ; by slaying him restore the Brahmana to life." As soon as he heard this, the lord of the earth, with a drawn sword in hand, ascended the aerial car Pushpaka and begun to move in all quarters and by-quarters in search of the Sudra ascetic.

VASANTI. A smoke-inhaling ascetic, Sambuka by name, is performing penance in this very Janasthana. Therefore I hope noble Rama may again adorn this forest.

ATREYI. Friend, I go now

VASANTI. Revered Atreyi, be it so ; but the day has far advanced. The trees on the banks having nests of birds on them are honoring the Godavari with their flowers, their stems loosened by the heat and falling down on account of the shaking caused by the itching elephants rubbing their round temples against the trees, the barks of which have the insects drawn out by the beaks of birds that scratch in the shade for food and on which flocks of wearied pigeons and the wild fowls are cooing. (*They walk about and depart.*)

(*End of the prologue*)

(*Then enter Rama seated in the Pushpaka, his sword drawn out with a feeling of compassion*)

RAMA. Oh ! right hand, let fall the sword on the Sudra ascetic, that it may revive the dead Brahmana boy. Thou art a limb of Rama, able to banish Sita exhausted by her heavy foetus ; whence canst thou have pity ? (*reluctantly striking*).

A deed has been done worthy of Rama. Will that Brahmana boy come to life again ?

HEAVENLY PERSON (*entering*). Victory, victory to the king ! When you, who can give protection even against Yama, have inflicted punishment on me, this child has been restored to life and mine is this glory ; I, Sambuka, bow down before your feet with my head. Even death arising from the contact of the good brings salvation.

RAMA. Both the events please us. Therefore enjoy the fruit of your hard penance. May you obtain those bright and blissful worlds, named Vairaja, the worlds that are pleasures and delights and holy prosperity.

SAMBUKA. All this is due to your favour only. Of what use is penance here ? Or rather, I am greatly indebted to my penance. That thou, the lord of creatures and protector of all, who art to be sought after in this world, hast arrived seeking me, a wretched Sudra, having traversed hundreds of Yojanas, that is here the benefit due to my penance ; otherwise how couldst thou ever have come from Ayodhya again into the wood of Dandaka ?

RAMA. What ! Is this indeed Dandaka ? (*looking all around*) How now ? In one place glossy and dark, in another unpleasant on account of their awful expanse, here and there having the quarters resounding with the hoarse roar of torrents, these stretches of the forest of Dandaka, the ground of which is familiar to me, are again seen, full of holy places, hermitages, mountains, streams, chasms and difficult paths.

SAMBUKA. This is Dandaka assuredly. While living here your Majesty formerly killed in battle fourteen thousand and fourteen demons, and three others, Khara, Dushana and Trimurdhan. On account of which it has become possible for even country people like myself to roam fearlessly in this Janasthana, the abode of ascetics.

RAMA. This is not only Dandaka but Janasthana also ?

SAMBUKA. Certainly. These are the extensive forests on the borders of Janasthana stretching in the southern direction. The caves of the mountains are full of herds of wild and fierce animals which cause the hair of all beings to stand erect. The borders of the wood are in some places noiseless and motionless, in others resounding with the terrible roars

of wild beasts, having fires kindled in them by the breath of serpents with broad hoods that have fallen asleep at their will, having a little clear water in the hollows of their crevices, and in which the moisture of the sweat of the python is drunk by thirsty chameleons.

RAMA. And I behold Janasthana once the abode of Khara. And I perceive past occurrences as if they were taking place before my eyes. (*Looking round in all directions*) The princess of Videha was exceedingly fond of groves and these are indeed those woods. What can be more terrible than this? (*with tears*) "I will live with you in the fragrant forests," thus she said and took delight in these; such was her love. A beloved person without doing anything drives away sorrow by joy; for whoever has a dear person has a possession of inestimable value.

SAMBUKA. Then enough of these unbearable woods! Now let the noble one see these calm and majestic middle forests, studded with mountains having the soft beauty of the necks of peacocks tuneful from joy, adorned with clumps of young trees affording dark thick shade and densely planted, and where the herds of deer of different kinds wander fearlessly. Here flow torrents, the numerous streams of which are noisy as they struggle through the bowers of Jambu trees, dark with their ripened wealth of fruit, having water that is pellucid, cool and fragrant with flowers of the Vanira creepers covered with the impassioned birds perching on them. Here the growls of young bears, dwelling in the caves, deepened by the echo, swell, and the perfume is spread abroad, cool, pungent and fragrant, issuing from the joints of the Sallaki trees split and scattered about by the elephants.

RAMA (*Restraining his tears*). Friend, may the path called Devayana be safe to you! May you vanish towards the holy worlds!

SAMBUKA. Having first saluted the sage Agastya, that old expounder of the knowledge of Brahma, I will enter the everlasting abode. (*So exit*).

RAMA. How do I behold the same wood once more today wherein we formerly lived for a long time, both as hermits and householders, devoted to our proper duties, and also tasting the flavor of worldly pleasures. These are those very

mountains, with peacocks uttering their notes on them, these are those very forest-lawns with intoxicated deer, these are those same river-banks, covered with beautiful vanjula creepers, and having Nichula trees that are deeply merged in water. This is the mountain Prasravana where the river Godavari flows by, and which appears as if it were near and is like a garland of clouds. On the great summit of this very mountain was the home of the vulture-king ; beneath it we possessed pleasure in those leafy huts, where is the delightful border of the wood in which coo the noisy birds and where the dark beauty of the trees is reflected in the water of the Godavari. Here therefore must be that Panchavati where there are spots which on account of our long sojourn there witnessed an excess of all kinds of confidential intercourse, and where a dear friend of my beloved, a sylvan deity named Vasanti, dwelt. What is this that has today befallen Rama ? For now my grief having become intense distracts me as if it were fresh, like fierce poison-juice after a long time violently bursting forth and circulating, like a splinter of an arrow shaken with force from some cause or other ; like an ulcer, the mouth of which has been closed up, re-opened in the vitals of my heart. Nevertheless I shall see those localities which were my former friends. (*observing*) Oh, the configuration of the objects is altered. For instance, where formerly there was the current of a river, there is now the sand of the rivers ; the density and thinness of trees have been exchanged ; seen after a long time, I almost think this wood to be a different one ; but the situation of the mountains assures me that it is the same. Oh ! my attachment for Panchavati seems to draw me forcibly when I am about to avoid this place. (*Pathetically*) How can cursed Rama, after having destroyed his beloved, now alone visit today that Panchavati or leave without honoring it, wherein he passed those days in her company as if in his own house, and in long conversations about which they remained engaged ever afterwards ?

SAMBUKA. Victory, victory to your Majesty ! My lord, the revered Agastya, having heard from me of your being in the neighborhood, sends you this message : "Having prepared the auspicious rites for your descent from the aerial car,

the affectionate Lopamudra awaits you and so do all the sages. Therefore come and honor us with your presence. Afterwards having gone to your own country in the swift Pushpaka, you will be ready for the Asvamedha sacrifice."

RAMA. As the venerable sage commands.

SAMBUKA. Your lordship then may direct the Pushpaka in this direction.

RAMA (*directing the Pushpaka*). Revered Panchavati, forgive Rama this momentary transgression of duty on account of his regard for the elders.

SAMBUKA. See, see, my lord. Here is the mountain Kraunshavata, where the tribes of crows are silent in the vast expanse of bamboo-clumps whistling in the wind, among which the crowds of owls hoot in the bowers which are their homes ; upon this the serpents, scared by the notes of the peacocks running hither and thither, climb up on the branches of the old sandal trees. Here are those southern mountains, with the peaks made blue by the clouds resting on their crests, and the waters of the Godavari rumbling and roaring in the ravines , here are those same holy confluences of the streams, the waters of which are deep ; which are awful with the roar of the waves rushing, overwhelmed with dashing against one another. (*Exeunt both*).

## ACT THREE

### *The Shadow*

(*Enter Two River Goddesses.*)

TAMASA. Friend Murala, why do you look to be in haste ?

MURALA. Friend, Tamasa, I am sent by Lopamudra, the wife of the sage Agastya, to the best of rivers, the Godavari, to deliver this message : "You know how since the abandonment of his wife the grief of Rama, not manifest on account of his profundity but causing secret and acute pain inside, is like a drug boiled in a closed pot. And by that long continuance of sorrow produced by a calamity happening to



such a beloved person, which has now gone to excess, good Rama is now exceedingly wasted. On beholding him my heart is as it were shaken to the very centre ; moreover, now that good Rama is returning, he must certainly behold in the Panchavati wood those regions which witnessed the affectionate confidences between him and his wife, produced by dwelling together ; and although good Rama is firm by nature, still owing to the violent agitation caused by his excessive and overwhelming sorrow, which must arise in such circumstances, at every step serious occasions of mishaps are to be apprehended for him in such places. Therefore venerable Godavari, thou shouldst be on the watch. In every fit of distraction there comes upon good Rama, refresh his life with breezes from thy waves, sent up gently, cool with particles of spray, carrying with them the scent of lotus-filaments."

TAMASA. This kindness is but fitting for affection ; but a radical means of reviving good Rama is at hand today.

MURALA. How do you mean ?

TAMASA. Listen. When long ago Lakshmana had gone after abandoning Sita in the neighborhood of Valmiki's penance grove, the queen Sita, when she found that the throes of childbirth had come upon her, threw herself into the stream of Ganga on account of the extreme violence of grief. And there at that very instant she gave birth to two boys, and, being favored by the venerable Earth and Ganga, was taken to the nether world ; and after they had been weaned the goddess Ganga in person committed her two boys to the care of the great sage Valmiki.

MURALA (*with astonishment*). Even the unhappy turns of fortune of such persons prove very wonderful, when such great beings serve as instruments.

TAMASA. But now the venerable Ganga having heard from the lips of Sarayu of the expected visit of dear Rama to Janasthana in connection with the Sambuka incident, entertaining the same apprehension which affection made Lopamudra to entertain, has come accompanied by Sita to visit the river Godavari on the pretense of performing some domestic rite.

MURALA. The revered deity wisely thought so. For, surely when dear Rama was in his capital, his attention being

taken up by these various occupations which are conducive to the prosperity of the world, the distractions of his mind were restrained, whereas, being unengaged and having no other companion but his grief, his entrance into Panchavati will be a great calamity to him. How is queen Sita then to comfort Rama ?

TAMASA. The revered Bhagirathi spoke : "Dear Sita, offspring of the sacrificial ground, today, as you know, is to be the ceremony of tying the auspicious knot for counting the twelfth year from the birth of the long-lived Kusa and Lava. Therefore worship with flowers gathered by thy own hand thy ancient father-in-law the sun-god, the dispeller of sin, the progenitor of such a great family of royal saints belonging to the race of Manu ; owing to my power not even the sylvan divinities shall be able to behold thee when thou art upon the surface of the earth, much less mortals." And I also received this order : "Tamasa, my daughter-in-law Janaki loves thee much ; therefore be thou her companion." And I am now fulfilling my mission.

MURALA. And I for my part will report this account to the revered Lopamudra. I think that good Rama too has arrived.

TAMASA. There emerging from the pool of the Godavari, Janaki comes to the wood, wearing a face beautiful though with cheeks exceedingly pale and emaciated, by the side of which her braid sways to and fro, as if she were the incarnation of Pathos, or the pain of separation from bodily form.

MURALA. This is she, resembling a charming sprout cut off from its stem. Long and terrible grief withering the flower of her heart wastes her very pale and emaciated frame, as heat produced in autumn the innermost petal of the Ketaki. (*They walk round and exeunt. End of the prologue.*)

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). A great mishap, a great mishap ! (*Then enter Sita, occupied in gathering flowers, listening with an expression of pathos and longing expectation*).

SITA. Ha ! I think it is my dear friend, Vasanti, that speaks.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). That young elephant, which the queen Sita long ago nourished with tips of Sallaki leaves gathered with her own hands, as it stood before her eager for food—

SITA. What of him ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Sporting with his mate in the water, that very elephant has been attacked and engaged by another mighty, wild elephant through pride for his strength.

SITA (*In confusion going forward a few steps*). My lord ! protect, protect that son of mine. (*Gesticulating recollection, with dejection*). Ah ! Ah ! Unfortunate that I am, the same words, to which I had been familiar for a long time, stand foremost on my lips at the sight of Panchavati. Alas, my lord ! (*faints*).

TAMASA (*Entering*). My child, take comfort ! take comfort !

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). O Sovereign of airships, stop here !

SITA (*Having recovered her consciousness, with joy and fear*).

Ha ! whence comes this reverberating utterance which is strong and deep like the heavy roaring of a cloud filled with water, which all of a sudden makes even a wretched person like myself yearn with longing, the cavities of my ears being filled with its sound ?

TAMASA (*with tears of affection*). O child ! Why art thou in such a state on account of an indistinct sound of uncertain origin, like a peahen startled and excited at the sound of a rain-cloud ?

SITA. Revered lady ! Do you call it "indistinct ?" From the combination of the notes I recognized it was my lord who spoke.

TAMASA. The report goes that the king of the race of Ikshvaku has come to Janasthana to punish a Sudra ascetic.

SITA. I am glad to see that the king does not neglect his duties.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Here are those very slopes of that mountain which has the Godavari in its vicinity, which are full of numerous torrents and caves, where even the trees and the wild animals are my friends, on which I dwelt for a long time in the society of my dear wife.

SITA (*Looking forth*). Ha ! is this my lord himself with a pale form, attenuated and weak like the disc of the moon in the morning, and recognizable only by his natural grace and dignified mien ? Revered Tamasa, support me. (*After uttering these words she swoons in the arms of Tamasa*).

TAMASA. Daughter, take comfort, take comfort.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). By this sight of Panchavati stupor

first envelops my senses, like a column of smoke arising from the fire of grief smouldering within, which will today blaze forth without restraint. O my dearest Janaki !

TAMASA (*to herself*). This is what was feared by the elders.

SITA (*Coming to herself*). Ah ! how is this ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ah, queen ! my beloved companion during my sojourn in the Dandaka wood, princess of Videha ! (*swoons*).

SITA. Ah ! ah ! Having addressed me, a wretched being, he has even swooned with the dark-blue lotuses of his eyes closing. Alas ! how has he fallen on the surface of the earth, helplessly and with his breath suspended ! Revered Tamasa ! Save, save ; bring my husband to life ! (*So saying she falls at her feet*).

TAMASA. Do thou thyself, O blessed one, restore the lord of the world, for dear is the touch of thy hand, and in it he takes delight.

SITA. Come what may, I do as thou biddest. (*Exit in haste*).

(*Then is seen Rama fallen on the ground being touched by Sita, in tears, and reviving and full of joy*).

SITA (*somewhat delighted*). I think the life of the three worlds has come back.

RAMA. Oh joy, what is this ? Can this be the juice of the leaves of the sandal-wood tree of Paradise ? Can this be a shower of the sproutlike lunar rays when pressed ? Can this be a revivifying elixir poured over my heart, gladdening again my scorched life ? Surely this is that touch to which I was formerly accustomed, which revives my soul, and soothes it ; which suddenly removing the swoon caused by grief, again diffuses numbness by giving joy.

SITA. (*Withdrawing in a timid and excited manner*). This much even is a great deal for me at present.

RAMA (*Sitting up*). Surely I cannot have been favored by my loving queen Sita ?

SITA. Ah ! ah ! then will my lord search for me ?

RAMA. Well ! Let me look about for her.

SITA. Revered Tamasa ! Let us move away. If the king sees me he will be more angry with me for having approached him without permission.

TAMASA. Oh my child ! By favor of the Ganges thou hast been made invisible even to the sylvan deities.

SITA. Ah, it is so.

RAMA. Ah, dear Janaki !

SITA (*Sobbing from fear*). My lord ! This is indeed inconsistent with what has happened. (*with tears*) Or rather, why should I, with an adamant heart, be relentless towards my lord, who, kind-hearted, thus addresses me, an unhappy woman, and whose sight it is not possible to obtain even in another life ! I know his heart and he also knows mine.

RAMA (*Looking all round, in despair*). Ah, there is no one here.

SITA. Revered Tamasa ! What is the state of my heart on beholding him under these circumstances, though he did not repudiate me without cause.

TAMASA. I know it, daughter, I know it. Thy heart, indifferent from despair, and clouded with anger on account of that unkind action, petrified as it were by this sudden meeting after this long separation and appeased on account of his goodness, full of compassion on account of the piteous words of thy beloved, is as it were melted with affection at this moment.

RAMA. Queen ! Thy touch moist and cool from affection, like incarnate favor, still gladdens me ; but where art thou, that causeth the delight ?

SITA. These are the mellifluous utterances of my lord which reveal a fathomless depth of affection, and overflow with delight, by hearing which I highly prize my existence, though my unjust banishment is a rankling dart.

RAMA. Or whence can my beloved be here ? Surely this must be Rama's delusion caused by his skill in constantly thinking about her.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ah ! Ah ! that young elephant, which the queen Sita long ago nourished with tips of Sallaki leaves gathered with her own hands, as it stood before her eager for food—

RAMA (*pathetically and eagerly*). What of him ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Sporting with his mate in the water, that very elephant has been attacked and engaged by another mighty, wild elephant through pride for his strength.

SITA. Who will now be appointed ?

RAMA. Where is he, where is that wicked one, that attacks the fondling of my dear wife with his mate ? (*He rises*).

VASANTI (*Entering in a flurry*). How ! his Majesty Rama !

SITA. Oh ! my dear friend Vasanti.

VASANTI. Victory, victory to the king !

RAMA (*Eying her*). What ! the queen's dear friend Vasanti !

VASANTI. King ! hasten, hasten ! Descend from here to the Godavari by the Sitatirtha lying to the south of Jatayu's peak and rescue the pet of the queen.

SITA. Ah ! father Jatayu, this Janasthana appears dreary without you.

RAMA. Oh, these allusions to past events cut my heart to the quick.

VASANTI. This way, my lord, this way.

SITA. Revered lady, is it indeed true that even the sylvan deities will not see me ?

TAMASA. Oh my daughter, the power of the goddess Ganges transcends that of all divinities; then why dost thou thus fear?

SITA. Then let us follow. (*They then walk about*).

RAMA. Revered Godavari, I bow to thee

VASANTI (*observing*). King ! rejoice at the victory of the queen's pet accompanied by his mate.

RAMA. May the longlived one be victorious !

SITA. Gracious heaven ! has my pet become so large ?

RAMA. O queen, you are to be congratulated. That pet of thine, who, with his tender tusk smooth like the fibre of a lotus stalk, shooting up, used to drag, fair one, the leaf of the laveli from the root of thy ear, being now the victor of rut-shedding elephants, has become a recipient of all the blessings which attend upon youth.

SITA. May he live long and may he never be separated from this gentle-looking mate !

RAMA. Friend Vasanti ! observe, observe our pet has learnt even the art of courting his beloved. For, after giving her morsels of lotus-stalks uprooted in frolic, he has given her mouthfulls of water perfumed with the blooming lotuses ; he afterwards besprinkled her to her heart's content with the shower of spray from his trunk, and then at the end of the bath he held over her through affection a lotus-leaf with a straight stalk as an umbrella.

SITA. Revered Tamasa ! He then has grown so large, but I do not know how tall Kusa and Lava have become in such a long time.

TAMASA. As he is, so are thy also.

SITA. So wretched am I, who am not only undergoing unbearable separation from my lord but from my sons too.

TAMASA. Such is the decree of Destiny.

SITA. To what purpose have I given birth to sons, inasmuch as my lord did not kiss their pure lotus-like faces, such as they are, with their cheeks bright on account of their teeth, a little thin, tender and white, on whose faces laughter plays accompanied by a charming sweet prattle and decked with locks.

TAMASA. May it be kissed by the favor of the gods !

SITA. Revered Tamasa, my breasts are heaving and overflowing with milk as I am thus put in mind of my sons, and now the proximity of their father has made me feel to be in the midst of domestic surroundings.

TAMASA. Need this be told ? Surely, a child is the utmost limit of the excess of affection, and it is the most powerful link to bind the parents to one another. An offspring is really the one knot of the hearts of the parents, since in it is centered their affection.

VASANTI. May your Majesty look also in this direction ! Here is the same peacock, with his crest raised up and appearing like a diadem of jewels, accompanied by his mate, uttering his cry upon the Kadamba tree, whom, with new-fledged feathers beautifully waving, your beloved wife nourished day by day.

SITA (*with admiration and tears of affection*). It is he, it is he.

RAMA. Rejoice, darling, rejoice.

SITA. So be it.

RAMA. I remember thee with affectionate heart like a son, as thou wast made to dance by my fair wife to the beatings of her tendril-like hands, who was adorning thee by the quick and charming play of her eye-brows and by her eyes that rolled in their sockets as you moved round. Oh, even animals hold fast to old friendships. This Kadamba tree which has put forth a few flowers was reared by my darling.

SITA (*Observing it with tears*). My lord has rightly recognised it.

RAMA. This mountain-peacock appears to remember the queen, because he falls into an ecstasy on it, as in the company of a relative.

VASANTI. Let your Majesty sit down here. (*Rama sits down*). Here is the stone slab in the midst of the thickly growing and tender plantain grove on which you used to recline in the company of thy beloved ; it is even now deserted by the deer, because Sita used often to stand here and give them grass.

RAMA. I cannot bear to look even at this. (*So he weeps and sits elsewhere*).

SITA. Friend Vasanti, what is this that you have done by showing this to my lord and to me ? Alas ! Alas ! My lord is the same ; this is the very forest of Panchavati ; this is the same Vasanti, my dear friend ; these are the very regions of the forest on the Godavari that witnessed our various confidential intercourse ; these are the same beasts, birds and trees that were not different to me from children ; and I am the same ; but all this does not exist for me, an unfortunate woman ; such has turned out to be the change in the mortal world.

VASANTI. Dear Sita, why don't you see the condition of Rama ? He, giving delight to our eyes by his limbs lovely like a fresh blue lotus, was ever new to us though seen at pleasure and continually ; even he with his senses distracted, his complexion turned pale and his body emaciated through grief can now be recognised but with great difficulty as the same ; and yet he is charming to the sight.

SITA. I see it, friend, I see it.

TAMASA. May you ever enjoy the sight of your husband !

SITA. Ah destiny ! who could have imagined even in a dream that I could be separated from him and he from me ? Then let me though for a moment, as if I had obtained a sight of him in another birth, behold my loving lord in the intervals between floods of tears.

(*She remains looking at him*)

TAMASA (*Clasping her, with tears*). Thy eye, white, sweet and beautiful shedding the tears of joy and grief, that fall in abundant showers, and pouring forth affection, having long eyelashes, turned up and stretched, bathes the lord of thy heart, like a stream of milk.



VASANTI. Let the trees dropping honey furnish an offering with flowers and fruit ; let the winds of the wood laden with the perfume of full-blown lotuses blow gently ; let the birds, with melodious tunes, sing sweetly without ceasing ; for king Rama has come here again in person to this wood.

RAMA. Come, friend Vasanti, sit here.

VASANTI (*sitting ; with tears*). Great king ! Is the prince Lakshmana well ?

RAMA (*not hearing it*). On beholding the trees, birds, and antelopes which Sita used to nourish with water, wild rice, and grass dispensed with her lotus-hand, a strange indescribable emotion capable of breaking even a stone comes over me, as if it were a melting of the heart.

VASANTI. Great king ! I ask if the prince Lakshmana is well.

RAMA (*to himself*). Ha ! She calls me "great king," a loveless mode of address, and with accents faltering from weeping asks after the health of Lakshmana only ; therefore I infer she knows the Sita affair. (*Aloud*) Ah ! the prince Lakshmana is well.

VASANTI (*weeping*). My lord, why are you extremely cruel ?

SITA. Friend Vasanti ! Why dost thou speak to him in this way ? My noble lord deserves kind words from every one, specially from my dear friend.

VASANTI. "Thou art my life, thou art my second heart, thou art the moonlight of my eyes, thou art ambrosia to my body." With these and hundreds of such sugared words having flattered that artless one—that very one thou . . . but enough, what need more talk in this matter ? (*She then swoons.*)

TAMASA. It is but natural that she should thus break off in her speech and faint.

RAMA. Compose thyself, friend, compose thyself.

VASANTI (*coming to herself*). Then why was this unworthy act ever done by your Majesty ?

SITA. Friend Vasanti ! cease, cease !

RAMA. Because people would not tolerate it.

VASANTI. For what reason ?

RAMA. They themselves knew—I know not what.

TAMASA. The rebuke comes too late.

VASANTI. Oh, hard-hearted one, fame, they say, is dear to

thee, but can any infamy be more terrible than this ? What became of the fawn-eyed one in the forest ? Tell me, lord, what dost thou suppose ?

SITA. Rather art thou, Vasanti, cruel and hard-hearted who thus tormentest my noble lord who is already afflicted.

TAMASA. No, it is love and grief that speaks so.

RAMA. Friend, what else could I think ? Surely, her creeper-like body resembling a soft and tender lotus, as if it were composed of moonlight, was torn to pieces by wild beasts, while she moved slowly on account of the throbbing burden of her womb, while her eyes rolled like those of a timid fawn but one year old.

SITA. My noble lord, I am still alive.

RAMA. Oh ! dear Janaki, where art thou ?

SITA. Ah ! Ah ! my noble lord is weeping aloud as if he were an ordinary person.

TAMASA. Dear child, it is but proper. The afflicted must extinguish their sorrow. When a tank is flooded, an outlet is the only remedy. When the mind is agitated by sorrow, it is sustained only by lamentations. This is especially the case with dear Rama to whom life has been exceedingly painful in many ways. He has to govern this world according to law with a vigilant mind ; sorrow for his beloved withers his heart as heat a flower ; as he himself repudiated thee, it is hard for him to seek relief from sorrow by weeping ; lamentation is, indeed, a gain to him in that he still continues to live and breathe on account of it.

RAMA. Ah ! Ah ! My heart that is deeply affected is bursting, but is not riven asunder in two. My shattered frame brings on stupor, but does not lose its consciousness ; an inward burning inflames my vitals, but does not cut off my life.

SITA. Even so.

RAMA. Ye honorable citizens and dwellers in the country ! Ye would not like the queen as reported to me to remain in my house, therefore I abandoned her like grass in the uninhabited forest, and did not even mourn for her ; but these various objects long familiar to me move me, therefore I being helpless weep thus bitterly ; please forgive me !

VASANTI (*to herself*). Very deep is the tide of the ocean of sorrow. (*Aloud*) My lord, in a matter that is past, summon courage.

RAMA. Friend ! why do you speak of courage ? It is now the twelfth year since the world was bereft of Sita ; her very name has been blotted out ; and Rama still lives.

SITA. I am charmed by these words of my noble lord.

TAMASA. Even so, my dear child. These words, though steeped in affection, should not be very dear to thee, but appalling from the sorrow they reveal ; they are streams of honey mixed with poison that flows upon thee.

RAMA. O Vasanti ! Did I not endure in my heart a sharp shaft of sorrow, through piercing the vitals, like a red-hot javelin driven obliquely into my heart or the venomous bite of a serpent thrust inside ?

SITA. So I, wretched woman that I am, have again become the cause of trouble to my noble lord.

RAMA. Though I had thus steadied my heart very firmly, still on seeing the various dear objects once familiar to me, I experience this uncontrollable agitation. Breaking through whatever emotion of grief that swells beyond bounds, there spreads over me forcibly some indescribable distraction of the heart, as the current of water, rushing with irresistible velocity, breaks through a dam of sand.

SITA. By this agitation caused by grief which has come upon my noble lord, the dreadful outburst of which cannot be arrested, my heart as it were forgetting its own sorrows is indescribably bewildered.

VASANTI (*to herself*). The king has fallen in a painful state. I will therefore divert him. (*Aloud*) Let my lord honor these parts of the Janasthana long familiar to him by looking at them.

RAMA. Just as you say. (*With these words he rises and walks about*).

SITA. I believe that the devices which my dear friend thought of to relieve his pain will only inflame it.

VASANTI (*pathetically*). Sire, Sire, thou wast in this very bower of creepers, having the eye directed towards her path, when she tarried long on a sandbank of the Godavari, having her attention attracted by the swans ; when she was returning, seeing you very much vexed she made, through fear, a graceful suppliant folding of the hands like the bud of a lotus.

SITA. Thou art cruel, friend Vasanti, thou art cruel, in that

thou dost again and again afflict me, wretched woman, and my noble lord, by shaking the arrows of grief buried in the vitals of the heart.

RAMA. Relentless Janaki ! Thou seemest to be seen here and there, but thou dost not take pity on me. Ah, queen ! my heart is bursting, the frame of my body is falling asunder ; I think the world to be a void, I burn within with thick flames ; my helpless soul sinks and is, as it were, engulfed in pitchy darkness ; and the distraction paralyses me from all sides ; wretched man that I am, what shall I do ? (*He swoons away*).

SITA. Ah ! ah ! my lord has swooned again.

VASANTI. My lord ! Take comfort ; take comfort.

SITA. Ah, my noble lord ! I am cursed, since there comes over you on account of me a change of condition, which is terrible on account of your life being put again and again in danger—you who are the support of the welfare of the whole world. (*so saying, swoons*).

TAMASA. Dear child ! Take comfort, take comfort. The touch of thy hand alone will again be a sure means of reviving dear Rama.

VASANTI. What ! does he not even now recover ? Ah dear friend Sita, where art thou ? Cause the lord of thy life to recover. (*Sita hurriedly approaches Rama and touches him on the heart and the forehead*).

VASANTI. O joy ! dear Rama has revived.

RAMA. This touch besmearing as if with ambrosial unguents the internal and also the external elements of my body, though it brings me back to life suddenly, diffuses through my frame another numbness, as it were from joy. (*with his eyes closed from delight*) Friend Vasanti, thou art fortunate.

VASANTI. In what respect, my lord ?

RAMA. Friend, what else ? Janaki is again with me !

VASANTI. Oh my lord Rama ! where is she ?

RAMA (*shows that he feels the pleasure of her touch*). Look ! surely here she is just in front of thee.

VASANTI. My lord, when I, unfortunate one, am already consumed by grief for my dear friend, why dost thou add fresh fuel to the flame by the wild talk terrible even to the piercing of my vitals ?

SITA. I wish to withdraw, but my hand, fastened as if with adamantine cement, has become full of perspiration, helplessly paralysed, and trembles as if utterly powerless on account of the touch of my noble lord, which, owing to his unchanged affection, is cool and refreshing to me, which quickly assuages my long and terrible sorrow.

RAMA. Friend ! How can you speak of wild talk ? That hand which, wearing bracelets, was long ago taken by me in the marriage ceremony, which possessed the same qualities as the rays of the moon, cool as ambrosia . . .

SITA. My noble lord ! thou art now the same.

RAMA (*continuing*). That very same hand of hers, beautiful through its resemblance to snowflakes and like a tender Lavali shoot, has again been obtained by me. (*With these words he seizes it.*)

SITA. Ah ! ah ! charmed by the touch of my lord, I have surely committed a blunder.

RAMA. Friend Vasanti ! Having my senses paralysed with joy, I am overcome by its agitation. Therefore do thou hold her for a moment.

VASANTI. Alas ! This is simply madness. (*Sita quickly snatches away her hand and withdraws.*)

RAMA. Ah ! ah ! what a blunder ! That leaf-like hand, numbed, perspiring and trembling, has suddenly slipped away from mine that is numbed, moist and trembling.

SITA. Woe ! Woe ! with eyes at one time wandering, at another fixed, at one time dazed, at another wildly rolling, he is not yet able to compose himself.

TAMASA (*Looking at Sita with affection, admiration and a smile*). My dear child, with her limbs perspiring, having their hair erect and quivering has become, through the delight caused by the touch of her beloved, like the branch of a Kadamba tree agitated by the wind, and washed by recent showers, with its buds just appearing.

SITA (*To herself*). Ah ! having thus lost control over my heart I am ashamed in the presence of revered Tamasa ; what will be her thoughts to behold this repudiation and yet such an affection on my part ?

RAMA (*Looking in every direction*). What ! is she not here ? Oh cruel Sita !

SITA. Indeed I am cruel in that seeing thee in this state I yet remain alive.

RAMA. Oh queen ! where art thou ? Take pity on me ! Thou oughtest not to abandon me in this plight.

SITA. Ah, my noble lord ! This seems to be the reverse of the truth.

VASANTI. My lord, be calm ! By means of thy own transcendental firmness steady thy soul, that is gone to excess of sorrow. How could my dear friend be here ?

RAMA. Evidently she is not here ; otherwise how could even Vasanti not see her ? I wonder whether it can be a dream ? But then I have not slept. How, indeed, could Rama sleep ? Undoubtedly it must be that powerful spirit of delusion due to my brooding over her image that repeatedly haunts me.

SITA. It is I, cruel woman, that have deluded my noble lord.

VASANTI. My lord, look, look ! Here is the car of black iron belonging to Ravana broken by Jatayu ; and in front of thee are the asses with mouths like those of goblins, of which the skeletons alone remain ; it was from this place that the enemy, having cut off with his sword the roots of Jatayu's wings, rose into the sky carrying Sita, trembling with wrath, thus resembling a cloud in which the lightning flashes.

SITA (*in terror*). My noble lord ! father Jatayu is being slain and I am being carried off ; so help !

RAMA (*rising with emotion*). Ha ! villain, that robbest me of Sita and Jatayu's life, whither art thou going ?

VASANTI. Oh king, meteor of destruction to the race of the Rakshasas ! Hast thou even now an object of wrath left ?

SITA. Ah ! I also have become distracted.

RAMA. My present change of condition is truly strange. That former separation from the fair-eyed one, which produced in the world the sensation of astonishment by means of the combats of warriors in which were constant incidents causing diversion, assuredly ended in the slaughter of my enemies through the use of remedies ; but how is this present never-ending irremediable separation to be borne without complaining ?

SITA. Never-ending ! Ah ! wretched woman that I am ! I am lost.

RAMA. Oh misfortune ! In what place art thou, my dearest,

where even the alliance of the monkey-chief is of no avail to me, where the prowess of the apes is fruitless, fruitless too is the wisdom of Jambavat ; where even the son of the wind cannot have access ; and where even Nala, the son of Visvakarman, cannot make a path ; whither even the arrows of Lakshmana cannot penetrate ?

SITA. I esteem very highly that former separation.

RAMA. Friend Vasanti ! the sight of Rama is now simply painful to his friends. How long shall I keep you weeping ? Give me leave to depart.

SITA (*with emotion and bewilderment, embracing Tamasa*)  
Revered Tamasa, my lord is now departing. (*She swoons*)

TAMASA. Dear child ! Take comfort, take comfort ! We also must go to the feet of Bhagirathi to perform the auspicious ceremony of the birthday rites of the long-lived ones, Kusa and Lava.

SITA. Revered one, be pleased. Let me behold, even for a moment, the person whose sight is not easy to obtain.

RAMA. I have now an associate in the performance of the Asvamedha ceremony.

SITA (*with agitation*). Who, my noble lord ?

RAMA. A golden image of Sita.

SITA (*Breathing a sigh of relief : with tears*). Thou art now indeed my noble lord ; my lord has now plucked out the dart of the shame of my repudiation.

RAMA. Let me now comfort my tear-bedewed eyes by looking at that.

SITA. Blessed is she who is highly esteemed by my noble lord, and who, by pleasing my lord, has become the support of the world's hope.

TAMASA (*embracing her with smiles and tears of affection*). Oh my dear child, in speaking thus thou praisest thyself.

SITA (*hanging her face down with a bashful expression, aside*).  
I am laughed at by the revered Tamasa.

VASANTI. This meeting is a great favor to me. But as for thy going, let it be so ordered as to prevent any neglect of duty.

RAMA. Vasanti has now become unfavorable to me.

TAMASA. My child, come, we must go.

SITA (*sorrowfully*). Let us do so.

TAMASA. But how canst thou go, the contact of whose eyes,

lengthened with longing as it were and rivetted on ~~my~~ beloved, can be checked only with heart-rending efforts ?  
SITA. My repeated bow to the lotus-feet of my noble lord, a sight of which is only procured by extraordinary merit.  
(*She swoons away*).

TAMASA. Dear child ! Take comfort, take comfort !

SITA (*Coming to herself*). How long can one expect to behold the full moon through an opening in the clouds ?

TAMASA. Oh wonderful is the arrangements of incidents ! The pathetic sentiment, though one in itself, being modified by various occasions, seems to assume different forms as it were, as water assumes the various modification of eddies, bubbles, and waves and it is all nevertheless, but only water.

\*RAMA. O Prince of Airships, come here ! (*All rise*.)

TAMASA AND VASANTI (*To Sita and Rama respectively*). May the earth and the river of the gods together with such divinities as ourselves and that great preceptor of your family, the originator of metres, and the sage Vasishtha, accompanied by Arundhati, bestow upon you blessings tending to great future prosperity ! (*Exeunt omnes*.)

## ACT FOUR

*Kausalya and Janaka*

(*Enter two ascetic boys*.)

FIRST BOY. Saudhataki ! observe the delightful appearance which the revered Valmiki's hermitage presents today by the elaborate preparation made for the guests who are assembled there in large numbers. The deer belonging to the hermitage drinks his fill of the warm and sweet scum of the boiled wild-rice that remains over and above what has been consumed by his beloved doe that has recently brought forth a young one ; and the fragrance of the cooking of vegetables mixed with the fruit of the jujube is diffused abroad slightly blended with the spreading odor of cooked rice mixed with ghee.



SAUDHATAKI. Welcome are the gray-bearded folks of various descriptions who have been the cause of this holiday.

FIRSTY BOY (*Laughing*). Your reason for showing respect for the elders is a peculiar one indeed !

SAUDHATAKI. O Dandayana, what is the name of the guest who has come today bringing with him a great company of old folks.

DANDAYANA. Fic upon your joking ! The fact is, it is the revered Vasishtha who has today arrived from the hermitage of Rishyasringa conducting the wives of the great king Dasaratha, with Arundhati at their head. Then why do you chatter in this wild way.

SAUDHATAKI. Ah ! Vasishtha ?

DANDAYANA. Certainly.

SAUDHATAKI. I thought, however, he was a tiger or a wolf.

DANDAYANA. How so ? What do you mean ?

SAUDHATAKI. Why, the moment he arrived he greedily feasted upon that poor tawny calf.

DANDAYANA. In acceptance of the holy text, the offering of welcome should be accompanied by a dish of flesh-meat—householders offer a heifer, a big bull or a goat to a Srotriya coming as a guest. And the writers of holy law enjoin this as a duty.

SAUDHATAKI. Oh ! you are caught.

DANDAYANA. How so ?

SAUDHATAKI. For, when the worshipful Vasishtha arrived the heifer was slaughtered. But today when the royal sage Janaka came the revered Valmiki offered the sacrifice with simple curds and honey, while he let off the heifer.

DANDAYANA. The holy sages prescribe this mode of reception only in the case of those who have not abstained from flesh ; but the revered Janaka has abstained from flesh.

SAUDHATAKI. For what reason ?

DANDAYANA. The moment he heard the sad calamity that befell Sita, he took to the life of an anchorite and it is some years since he has been practising religious austerities in the penance-grove of Chandradvipa.

SAUDHATAKI. Then why has he come here ?

DANDAYANA. To see the revered Valmiki, his old and intimate friend.

SAUDHATAKI. Has he had an interview with his relations today or not ?

DANDAYANA. It was only just now the revered Vasishttha sent the venerable Arundhati to Kausalya to say, "thou must come in person and see the king of Videha."

SAUDHATAKI. Just as these old folks are met together, let us also meet the boys and celebrate by playing the festive occasion of a holiday. Where, then, is Janaka ? (*They walk about*).

DANDAYANA. Here is that aged royal sage Janaka, an expounder of Brahma, who having paid his respects to Valmiki and Vasishtha, now takes up his seat at the root of the tree outside the hermitage. He is tormented by grief for Sita, ever clinging to his heart, like an old tree with fire spreading within. (*Exeunt both*).

(*End of the prologue ; enter Janaka*)

JANAKA. The grief produced by the great calamity, inflicted upon my child, which was sharp, heart-wounding and painful, does not cease, but being poignant and continually felt, and as if ever fresh, though of long standing, still cuts through my vitals like a saw. What a hard fate ! My wretched body, though its essential elements are dried up by old age, and overbearing grief, and again by penances as Paraka, Santapana and others, and thus deprived of its supports, does not fall dead ; and the sages think those sunless worlds called Andhatamisra are allotted to those who slay themselves. The terrible agony of my grief, which is fresh even after many years and the vividness of which is brought out by continual brooding, does not cease. Oh ! dear Sita, sprung from sacrificial ground, such is the lot of thy birth that has developed itself that from shame I cannot even weep freely. Ah ! my daughter ! I remember thy lotus-like face as a child, overspread with capricious smiles and tears, in which glittered the points of some soft bud-like teeth, the sweet prattle of which was faltering and senseless. O revered Earth, you are very hard-hearted ! Why do you bear, O cruel one, the destruction in that manner of that daughter of yours whose greatness you, the holy fire, the

sages, Vasishtha's wife and Ganga, nay even the divine son, the progenitor of Raghu's race, himself knew ; whom you brought forth as the goddess of speech did learning, and who herself was of divine rank like any of the preceding ?

VOICE (*Behind the curtain*). This way, this way, your exalted ladyship and great queen.

JANAKA (*Looking*). Ha ! the revered Arundhati, with Grishti showing her the way. (*rising up*) But whom could he mean by great queen ? (*observing*) Ah, ah ! How is it that she is my dear friend Kausalya, the lawful wedded wife of the great king Dasaratha ? Who could believe that it was she ? She was in the house of Dasaratha like the goddess of prosperity. Or rather, she was the goddess of prosperity herself ; what need of the particle of comparison ? Ah ! that very lady has become as it were a changed thing by the power of fate, a strange being of grief all compact ; ah ! the reverse of destiny ! The sight of that very person, who was formerly an embodied feast to my eyes, has now become intolerable like salt to a wound. (*Then enter Arundhati, Kausalya and Chamberlain*).

ARUNDHATI. I tell thee, the command of the spiritual guide of thy family addressed to thee was this : thou must come in person and see Vidha's king. It was for this reason that I was sent ; then why this great hesitation at every step ?

CHAMBERLAIN. Queen ! fortify thyself. I request thee to comply with the injunction of the revered Vasishtha.

KAUSALYA. The necessity of beholding the lord of Mithila at such a time makes all my sorrows to break out once again. I cannot compose my heart, the main roots of which are cracking.

ARUNDHATI. What doubt is there about this ? The sorrows of mortals, produced by separation from relations, though continually felt, become at the sight of some dear person intolerable, and surge around us as if with a thousand streams.

KAUSALYA. How can I show my face the presence of that royal sage her father, after what has happened to my dear daughter-in-law ?

ARUNDHATI. Here is thy estimable relation, the chief of the house of Janaka, to whom the saint Yajnavalkya expounded the whole knowledge of Brahma.

KAUSALYA. Here is that royal saint, the father of my dear daughter-in-law, the delight of the heart of the great king, Dasaratha. Ah ! ah ! I am forced to remember those days which were charming on account of the absence of dejection. O Destiny ! All that is no more.

JANAKA (*Approaching*). Revered Arundhati ! Janaka of Videha, whose banner is the plough, bows to you. With head resting on the ground I honor thee by whom thy husband, though a storehouse of holy light, though certainly the greatest even among the great sages of old, considers himself purified, thee who are the cause of welfare to the three worlds, who are to be worshipped by the whole earth like the goddess of the dawn.

\*ARUNDHATI. May the supreme Light shine upon thee ! May the god that blazes and stands beyond the reach of darkness purify thee !

JANAKA. Noble Grishti ! is that mother of the king, who protects his subjects, well ?

CHAMBERLAIN (*To himself*). We are cruelly and unreservedly reproached. (*Aloud*) Royal saint ! Thou oughtest not to inflict fresh sorrow, as thou dost by this anger, upon the queen, who is already very sorrowful and has long lost the sight of the moon-face of dear Rama. It was surely some lamentable misfortune of dear Rama also. For hearing that some dreadful slander was spreading everywhere among the citizens and the country-folk, who, being mean-minded, would not believe in the purification by fire, his Majesty committed that piece of cruelty.

JANAKA (*angrily*). Ha ! who indeed is this so-called fire that he should presume to purify my daughter ? Ah ! after we have been insulted by Rama, we are again insulted by a person talking in this way.

ARUNDHATI (*Sighing*). Even so ! To mention fire in connection with my darling is derogatory. The word Sita is enough. Ah, daughter ! As for thy standing to me in the relation of child or pupil, let that be as it is ; in any case the excellence of thy purity strengthens my adoration for you ; whether childhood or womanhood be thine, surely thou art to be worshipped by the worlds ; in virtuous beings virtues are the object of reverence, not sex nor age.

KĀUSAKYA. Ah ! my sorrows burst forth. (*She faints*).

JANAKA. Alas ! what is this ?

ARUNDHATI. Royal sage, what else could it be ? that king, that happiness, those children, and those days—all this was recalled to her mind on beholding thee, her friend ; and then at the hour of that terrible reverse of condition thy friend lost her senses, for the minds of matrons are soft as a flower.

JANAKA. Ah ! ah ! truly I have become cruel in every way, since I do not receive affectionately the beloved wife of my dear friend, seen after a long time. He was my worthy relation, he was a dear friend, he was my own heart ; and he was to me incarnate joy, and the whole object of my life, body and life and whatever is dearer than these—what was not the beloved and august king Dasaratha to me ? Ah, this is that very Kausalya. Whatever great offense she or her lord had committed in private, I became separately the person to be blamed by husband and wife ; afterwards it depended upon me whether they should be reconciled or continue to be angry ; but enough ; why should I call to mind what overcomes and consumes my heart ?

ARUNDHATI. Ah ! Her heart has become motionless on account of her breath being long suspended.

JANAKA. Oh dear friend ! (*He sprinkles her with the water in his gourd*).

CHAMBERLAIN. Wonderful ! Fortune, having first shown like an agreeable friend an unmixed favorableness, afterwards becoming terrible in her unexpected reverse, increases exceedingly the anguish of the mind.

KĀUSALYA (*Recovering*). O child of Janaki, where art thou ? I remember the lotus of thy beautiful face on which a pure smile used to play, the chief ornament of which was the glory due to the recent celebration of marriage. Brighten my lap once more, dear child, with your limbs lovely like glittering moonlight. The great king would always say : This is the daughter-in-law of our mighty ancestors of the race of Raghu, but as Janaka's daughter she is only a daughter to us.

CHAMBERLAIN. It was as the queen says. Although the king had five children, the foe of Subahu was especially dear to

him, and although he had four daughters-in-law, Sita was as dear to him as his own daughter Santa.

JANAKA. Oh my dear friend, great king Dasaratha ! Thus thou art in every way dear to my heart ; how can I forget thee ? Ordinarily the parents of the girl honor the near relations of their son-in-law ; in our connection that was inverted, thou didst strive to please me ; thou, being such, hast been snatched away by Death, and Sita also, the cause of our connection ; but curses on this my life, a sinner in this horrible hell of a world.

KAUSALYA. Daughter Sita ! what am I to do ? This cursed life, clinging firm and fastened with adamant cement, does not leave me, wretched woman that I am.

ARUNDHATI. Take comfort, princess ; occasionally one must even desist from tears ; moreover don't you remember what your family preceptor said at the hermitage of Rishyasringa that what was fated to happen took place but that it would end in good ?

KAUSALYA. How can I expect such a thing, all whose hopes are past fulfilment ?

ARUNDHATI. Then what dost thou think, princess ? Do you think that it was a false utterance ! Surely it will come to pass, thou oughtst not indeed to think otherwise, noble matron of the Kshatriya race. Let there be no doubt in respect to the utterance of Brahmanas in whom the supreme light is revealed ; for an excellent fortune waits upon their word ; they speak no ineffectual speech. (*A great noise behind the scenes. All listen.*)

JANAKA. Oh today being a holiday in honor of guests, it is the noise of boys engaged in unrestrained sport.

KAUSALYA. Indeed, childhood is the time when joy is easily attained. (*observing*) Ha ! who is this in their midst that refreshes my eyes with proud limbs, beautiful and soft ; adorned with grace like that of dear Rama when young ?

ARUNDHATI (*with tears of joy, to herself*). This is that secret like ambrosia to my ears communicated to me by Ganga ; but I do not know which of the two, Kusa and Lava, this youth is. (*Aloud*) Who is this that being seen suddenly produces on my eyes the effect of ambrosial collyrium, dark and soft like the leaf of the lotus, decorated with the

lock of hair on his head, of noble beauty, adorning as it were with his grace the crowd of boys, as if he were that darling of mine, the joy of the house of Raghu, again become a child ?

CHAMBERLAIN. This boy must be some Kshatriya in the condition of a religious student, I think.

JANAKA. So he is. For on his back he carries two quivers, one on each side, the heron-feathers of the arrows in which are kissed by his hair ; his breast, streaked with the purifying mark of slight ashes, has on it the skin of the deer ; his lower garment, dyed with red madder, is held fast by a girdle of Murva grass ; and in his hand he has a bow with a rosary and also a pippala staff. Revered Arundhati ! what dost thou surmise ? Whence does this boy come ?

ARUNDHATI. We have come only today.

JANAKA. Noble Grishti ! I feel exceedingly curious. Therefore go and ask the revered Valmiki himself and say to the boy, "certain old people here wish to see thee."

CHAMBERLAIN. As your Majesty commands. (*Exit.*)

KAUSALYA. What do you think ? Will he come when called in this way ?

JANAKA. How can good manners be wanting in one of such noble form ?

KAUSALYA (*observing*). How is this ? That dear youth, after listening with modesty to the speech of Grishti and dismissing the hermit boys, is coming towards us.

JANAKA (*observing him for a long time*). Ha ! this is strange ! There is an excess of great qualities in him softened by modesty, youth and candor, capable of being discerned by the wise, but not by the unwise. This powerful ecstasy carries away my mind, though dulled by stupor, as a very small piece of load-stone attracts a mass of iron.

LAVA (*Entering*). How shall I address my salutation to these persons whose names, rank and family I do not know, although they command my respect ? (*Thinking*). This mode of salutation is unobjectionable, as the elders say. (*Approaches respectfully*). Lava thus bows to you in succession.

ARUNDHATI AND JANAKA. Blessed boy, may you live long !

KAUSALYA. Dear child ! live long !

ARUNDHATI. Come here, dear boy. (*Seating Lava on her lap, to herself.*) Happily, not only has my lap, but also the cherished desire of my heart been blest after a long time.

KAUSALYA. Dear child ! Come here too. (*taking him on her lap*) Oh ! not only by his bodily frame which is dark and shining like a half-opened blue lotus, but also by his voice, which is very deep like the cry of swans whose throats are astringent with devouring the filaments of lotuses, does he resemble Rama ; the touch of the boy's body, soft like the fully developed interior of a lotus, is like the touch of Rama's ! My child ? let me look at thy lotus-like face. (*Raising his chin, observing it closely, with tears and feeling.*) Royal saint ! dost thou not see ? When closely examined his face resembles the moon-like face of my dear daughter-in-law.

JANAKA. I see, my friend, I see.

KAUSALYA. Ah, my heart that is as if distracted prattles something strange with reference to the boy.

JANAKA. In this boy are manifested, as it were perfectly mirrored, all the very form, all the very grace of my daughter and the chief of the house of Raghu ; there is the same voice, the same natural modesty, and the same auspicious majesty. Ah destiny ! why does my mind run wavering in delusive paths ?

KAUSALYA. Dear child ? hast thou a mother ? or rememberest thou thy father ?

LAVA. No. no.

KAUSALYA. Then whose son art thou ?

LAVA. Of the revered Valmiki.

KAUSALYA. Oh my darling ! say what is fit to be said.

LAVA. This is all I know.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Here ! here ! soldiers ! Truly this prince Chandraketu commands that no one is to trespass on the neighbourhood of the hermitage.

ARUNDHATI and JANAKA. Ha ! ha ! That dear Chandraketu is to be seen today is truly a happy event, coming as he does on the occasion of guarding the sacrificial horse.

KAUSALYA. "The son of dear Lakshmana commands," such are the words I hear, charming like drops of nectar.

LAVA. Noble Sir ! Who is this person named Chandraketu.



JANAKA. Thou knowest Rama and Lakshmana, the sons of Dasaratha ?

LAVA. They are the heroes of the poem called Ramayana.

JANAKA. Just so.

LAVA. How then can I not know them ?

JANAKA. Chandraketu is the son of that Lakshmana.

LAVA. Son of Urmila then and grandson of the royal sage, king of Mithila.

ARUNDHATI (*smiling*). Oh ! the boy has shown a great knowledge of the poem.

JANAKA (*Reflecting*). If you are so conversant with that history, then answer me this question. What are the names of the children of these sons of Dasaratha and from what wives they were severally born ?

LAVA. This part of the poem has not been heard before by me or by anyone else.

JANAKA. What ? has it not been composed by the bard ?

LAVA. Composed, but not published. However a certain portion of it has been arranged in a different form, full of sentiments and rendered fit for dramatic representation ; and after writing it with his own hand, the revered sage has sent it to the sage Bharata, the author of the aphoristic work on dramaturgy.

JANAKA. With what object ?

LAVA. The revered sage Bharata will have it acted by the Apsarases.

JANAKA. All this sounds extremely wonderful.

LAVA. Moreover the revered Valmiki has been exceedingly careful in this matter. That manuscript was sent to the hermitage of Bharata with some pupils and my brother was despatched, bow in hand, as their escort to ward off any possible danger.

KAUSALYA. My dear child ! hast thou a brother too ?

LAVA. I have ; the noble Kusa is his name.

KAUSALYA. By the word "noble" thou meanest to say he is the elder.

LAVA. Even so, he is indeed my elder by order of birth.

JANAKA. What, are you twins ?

LAVA. Quite so.

JANAKA. Child, tell me to what point has the composition of the poem been brought down ?

LAVA. After the king distracted by the lying calumny of the people had banished Sita, the queen sprung from sacrificial ground, Lakshmana, having left her alone in the wood with the pangs of child-birth approaching, returned—here the story stops.

KAUSALYA. Oh ! my dear girl with the beautiful moon-like face ! I wonder what crowning termination of the cruel sport of fate befell thy flower-like body when thou wast left alone in the wood.

JANAKA. Ah, my child ! Having experienced that insult and the dreadful forest, and that pain produced by the hour of childbirth, when the hosts of eaters of raw flesh were encompassing thee about, thou must surely have repeatedly thought of me as a protector in thy fear.

LAVA (*To Arundhati*). Noble lady ! who are these ?

ARUNDHATI. This is Kausalya, this is Janaka. (*Lava surveys with great respect and sorrowful interest*)

JANAKA. Oh ! the wickedness of the citizens ! Oh the precipitate action of king Rama ! While I brood unceasingly over this terrible thunderstroke of calamity, it seems to me the time has come for my wrath to blaze forth either with curse or bow.

KAUSALYA (*With dismay and trembling*). Revered madam, help ! help ! appease the incensed royal sage.

LAVA. Such is mostly the state of mind of the spirited that have received an insult.

ARUNDHATI. King ! Rama is your son, and the poor subjects are to be protected.

JANAKA. But in Rama's case, peace to these both ; for he is my treasure in the form of a son ; the citizens are chiefly composed of Brahmanas, children, old and decrepit persons and women.

BOYS. (*Entering, in a state of excitement*). Friend, we have heard of a certain creature which they call a horse in the country and we have seen the beast today with our own eyes.

LAVA. They speak of the "horse" in treatises on animals and warfare ; tell me then how it looks.

BOYS. Listen. Behind he carries a flowing tail, and that he waves continually ; he has a long neck ; he has four hoofs ; he eats grass ; he sheds lumps of dung the size of a mango ; but what is the use of description ? He is all the while going far off ; come, come, let us go after him. (*They advance and drag him by his deer-skin and his hands*).

LAVA (*with a face expressing interest, consciousness of offending and curiosity*). Noble people, look, I am carried off by these boys. (*He runs round quickly*).

ARUNDHATI and JANAKA. Satisfy thy curiosity, dear child.

KAUSALYA. I as well as you feel gratified by the speech and form of one who has the forest in him. Revered lady, when I do not behold him, I feel as if I were robbed ; therefore let us advance and follow with our eyes for a time that boy of long life, as he runs.

ARUNDHATI. How canst thou keep in sight that active fellow, who must have gone a great distance by this time ?

CHAMBERLAIN (*Entering*). The revered Valmiki saith : "In due time you will know all this."

JANAKA. This is of very grave import. Revered Arundhati, friend Kausalya, noble Grishti ! We will ourselves go and see the revered Valmiki. (*Exeunt all the old people. Enter several boys.*)

BOYS. Let our friend look at the wonderful sight.

LAVA. I see and understand. Surely this is a sacrificial horse.

BOYS. How do you know that ?

LAVA. Surely, you fools, you must have read the section devoted to it. Do you not see ? "To each such horse not less than one hundred guards armed with corslet, staves and quivers." This force is evidently composed of soldiers so armed. If you do not believe all this, go and ask.

BOYS. Ho ! Ho ! For what reason does this horse roam about guarded ?

LAVA (*wistfully to himself*). Oh ! The horse sacrifice is indeed the permanent and mighty test of the superiority of world-subduing Kshatriyas, that casts reproach upon all the rest of the warrior-tribe.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). This horse is the banner or rather the proclamation of valor of the only hero of the seven worlds, the foe of the race of the ten-headed Ravana.

LAVA (*with pride*). Ah ! how irritating the words are !

BOYS. What do you say ? The prince is clever indeed !

LAVA. Ho ! ho ! Is the world then void of Kshatriyas that proclamations are made in such a style ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). You, sir ! whence can there be Kshatriyas compared to the great king ?

LAVA. Fie upon you, impudent babblers ! If they are Kshatriyas, they do exist ; but what does this threatening proclamation mean today ? Why utter these words ! Here I carry off that boasted banner of yours. Ho ! you boys ; surround the horse and drive it with clods of earth. Let the poor thing graze among deer. (*Enter a man full of indignant pride.*)

MAN. Curses on thy thoughtlessness ! What didst thou say ? Surely the lines of very fierce soldiers will not put up with an insolent speech even from a boy. Prince Chandraketu is difficult to be subdued ; so run quickly into yonder thicket of trees before the prince advances, who has his mind occupied with the delight of beholding this charming, wonderful wood.

BOYS. Friend, enough of this horse ! The lines of the soldiers with flashing weapons threaten the prince, and the hermitage is far away ; so let us flee with the bounding leaps of deer.

LAVA (*Smiling*). What, are the weapons really flashing ? (*Raising his bow*) Let this bow, lapping with the tongue of its string its broad tooth-like points, emitting a terrible thick and hoarse roar, enlarge its maw, imitating the yawning of the machine-like jaws of death grinning when busy in swallowing the world. (*All walk round in proper order and depart*).

## ACT FIVE

### *Princes in Combat*

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ho soldiers ! Succor has come to us ! succor has come. Surely here is Chandraketu advancing, having heard the noise of our fight, in a chariot drawn by

swift horses, which are galloping, being furiously urged on by Sumantra, having his bannerpole of kovidara wood violently shaking on account of the uneven ground. (*Enter in a chariot driven by Sumantra, Chandraketu, bow in hand and with a feeling of joy and hurry mingled with wonder*).

CHANDRAKETU. Noble Sumantra, see, see. Here is the hero boy of unknown lineage, having his lovely face flushed with slight anger, having his five locks dancing up and down, that showers in the front of battle a rain of arrows upon my troops with his bow, the tips of which continually twang with the string. Wonderful ! Wonderful ! The hermit-boy, being single-handed, resembling a new and unknown scion of the house of Raghu, excites my admiration, whose arrows flame by thousands on all sides among the dense array of soldiers, arrows which cleave with a terrible clash the temple-joints of the elephants.

SUMANTRA. Long-lived one ! Having beheld the boy exceeding in might gods and demons and possessing also a form similar to Rama, I call to mind Rama when he had taken his bow to destroy the foes of Visvamitra's sacrifice.

CHANDRAKETU. My heart is ashamed because many direct their efforts against him alone. For this boy alone is surrounded by my soldiers, the broad palms of whose hands are full of multitudes of weapons fiercely flashing with excessive pride, whose chariots ring with tinkling golden bells, who are tumultuous with elephants resembling clouds and raining down showers of rut.

SUMANTRA. Dear boy ! what could these soldiers do against him if they were united ? much more are they helpless when scattered.

CHANDRAKETU. Worthy sir, make haste, for this warrior has begun to make great havoc among our dependents. For the hero, amplifying the noise of his bow-string, which gives pain to the ears of the herds of elephants that roar in the mountain bowers and that is swollen by the loud beating of drums, makes, with the heaps of heads and trunks which are still struggling and terrible, the earth as if strewn with the remnants of food rejected from the terrible mouth of death sated with slaughter.

SUMANTRA (*To himself*). How can I allow dear Chandraketu

to engage in single combat with such a warrior ? (*Thinking*) But I have grown old in Raghu's line and now that the fight is impending, what way is there ?

CHANDRAKETU (*with astonishment, shame and excitement*). Ah ! my troops have retired on every side !

SUMANTRA (*Driving forth the chariot*). Prince of long life ! that hero is within your call.

CHANDRAKETU (*Forgetfully*). Noble sir, what name did the heralds proclaim as his ?

SUMANTRA. Lava.

CHANDRAKETU. Ho ! great-armed Lava ! what hast thou to do with these soldiers ! Here I am, attack me, let fire be quenched in fire.

SUMANTRA. Prince ! look, look ! Being summoned by thee, this youthful hero turns back from the slaughter of the army, as a haughty lion's whelp on hearing the roar of clouds, from destroying the ranks of elephants. (*Then enter Lava with steady and haughty strides*).

LAVA. Bravo ; prince, bravo ! Truly thou art a descendant of Ikshvaku ; so I shall come to meet you presently. (*A great noise behind the curtain. Turning back firmly.*) What ! do these leaders of the army, though defeated, return eager for battle, and now obstruct me ? Curse on the wretches ! Let this great, confused and wanton roar, rising on every side like the flood, the sea agitated by the wind of the day of doom, be swallowed by the accumulated flame of my fierce anger, which is like the submarine fire from the mouth of earth's core stirred by dashing against mountains. (*He walks about quickly*).

CHANDRAKETU. O ! youth, thou art dear to me even from thy wonderful eminence of virtue, therefore thou art my friend ; whatever is mine is thine also ; then why dost thou deal carnage among thy own dependents ? Surely I, Chandraketu, am the only touch-stone of thy pride of valor.

LAVA (*Turning round with joyful excitement*). Oh ! gentle and stern at the same time is the heroic speech of the high-minded prince of the race of the Sun. Then what have I to do with these ? I will honor him then. (*A fresh tumult behind the scenes. He speaks with anger and disgust*). Ah, ah ! I am annoyed by these men, again and again impeding

my meeting with the hero. (*He advances towards them*).

CHANDRAKETU. Noble one ! behold this sight worthy to be beheld. This hero, having his eye fixed on me with pride mingled with curiosity, having his bow raised aloft, being followed by my army, resembles a cloud that bears the bow of India, driven to and fro by a violent wind in two opposite directions.

SUMANTRA. The prince only is able to see him, but I am simply overpowered with amazement.

CHANDRAKETU. O Princes ! Shame to you and shame to me, that you have thus engaged in battle treating him your equal ; you innumerable, mounted on elephants, horses and cars, against this one foot soldier ; you sheathed in mail, against one wearing the holy deer-skin as a garment ; you mature in age against one whose body is lovely in its youth.

LAVA (*with pain*). What ! does he even pity me ! (*thinking*) Good ! in order to prevent waste of time I will paralyse the hosts with the weapons of stupefaction. (*Throws himself into an attitude of contemplation*).

SUMANTRA. Ho ! how is this that the uproar of our army ceased all of a sudden !

LAVA. I shall now see that bold one.

SUMANTRA (*with excitement*). Prince, I think that the boy has invoked the Jimbhaka missile.

CHANDRAKETU. What doubt can there be as to that ? A terrible blending, so to speak, of darkness and lightning afflicts the eye even when concentrated to behold objects, for it is first swallowed by gloom and then set free, moreover this army stands motionless as if in a picture ; surely it must be this weapon of stupefaction working with invincible power. Wonderful ! wonderful ! The sky is over-spread with stupefying weapons, black like the darkness accumulated in bowers within the bowels of hell, the flames of which gleam with a yellow brightness like that of brass flashing when heated ; and which resemble the peaks of the Vindhya mountain, the caverns of which are blown off by harsh and fierce winds at the time of the destruction of the world.

SUMANTRA. But whence can he have derived the knowledge of the Jimbhaka weapons ?

CHANDRAKETU. I suppose from the revered Valmiki.

SUMANTRA. It cannot be so, dear prince, with missiles, and particularly with the Jrimbhaka missiles. These were the offspring of Krisasva ; from him they passed to Kausika ; he handed them over to dear Rama and with him they rest now.

CHANDRAKETU. Others too, whose minds are filled with the light of wisdom and who are the seers of holy visions, see everything themselves without being taught.

SUMANTRA. Prince ! be on thy guard ; thy rival hero has returned.

THE TWO PRINCES (*each to the other*). O, how noble-looking this prince is ! (*They behold each other with love and affection*). Can it be our chance meeting, can it be the excellence of his qualities, or an ancient acquaintance intimately formed in some previous life, or some relationship between us two unknown by the power of fate ? My heart becomes all attention on beholding him.

SUMANTRA. Generally this is the way of living beings, that one person feels an ardent affection for some other person, which worldly people call friendship of the planets and love at first sight ; wise men say that love is indescribable and without apparent cause. There is no preventing that liking which is causeless, for that is a thread composed of affection knitting together beings internally.

THE TWO PRINCES (*with reference to each other*). How am I to discharge arrows against this body, lovely like a polished fillet, on meeting which my frame through the desire of embracing it has its hair standing on end ? But what resource have I in dealing with one who has displayed his stern valor unless I employ weapons or what is the use of that weapon of which such a man is not made the mark ? What will he say of me, if I thus turn back from the fight, though weapons are uplifted ? For the warrior's code of honor, being stern in its spirit, obstructs the course of affection.

SUMANTRA (*Marking Lava, with tears, to himself*). My heart, why dost thou become unsteady so strangely ? The germ of my hopes was taken away by fate, when the creeper has been already cut down, whence can there come the advent of a flower ?



CHANDRAKETU. Venerable Sumantra, I get down from the chariot.

SUMANTRA. And for what purpose ?

CHANDRAKETU. In the first place this hero may be honored ; secondly, worthy sir, I shall be thus observing the custom of the warrior caste properly. "Men in chariots do not fight with men on foot," so say those that know the law.

SUMANTRA (*To himself*). Ah ! I am brought into a difficult situation. How can one like me forbid a righteous proceeding or how can I approve an action of which rashness is the only essence ?

CHANDRAKETU. Even when the elders of my family consult your worthy self, the dear friend of thy father, on doubtful questions, pray why does the noble one now hesitate ?

SUMANTRA. Long-lived one, your sentiment is quite consistent with the rules of duty. This is the law of battle, this is the everlasting code of honor, for this is the path of heroic action of the lions of the house of Raghu.

CHANDRAKETU. The words of the noble one are most fitting. Thou knowest the chronicles and the legends and the treatises of law, and the custom of the house of Raghu.

SUMANTRA (*Embracing him with tears of affection*). Dear boy ! How few indeed are these days that have passed since thy dear father, the slayer of Indrajit, was born ! His son also follows his heroic conduct. Fortunately the race of Dasara-tha has obtained stability.

CHANDRAKETU (*With pain*). When the eldest of Raghu's house is without an heir, how can there be true stability of race ? Reflecting on this, the three other elders of our family are tormented with grief.

SUMANTRA. Ah ! These words of Chandraketu are torturing my inmost heart.

LAVA. Ah ! My feelings are mixed. As the night-lotus joys when the moon rises, so does my sight when he appears , but this arm of mine longs for battle and is fond of my heavy bow tuneful on account of the string that resounds with a terrible twanging and that arm clearly reveals its awful heroic ardor.

CHANDRAKETU (*Descends from the chariot*). Noble sir, Chandraketu of the solar race salutes you.

SUMANTRA. May the great primeval Boar grant thee success over thy enemy ! May the sun, who is the father of thy race befriend thee in fight ; may Vasishtha, who is the spiritual, father even of thy fathers, give thee joy ; mayest thou have the might of Indra and Vishnu, of the gods of fire and wine, and of the celestial eagle ; and may the charm of the twang of Rama's bow-string and of Lakshmana's give thee victory !

LAVA. Prince ! Thou truly appearest exceedingly splendid when in thy chariot ; enough, enough of this excessive courtesy.

CHANDRAKETU. Then let the high-souled one for his part adorn another chariot.

LAVA. Worthy sir ! cause the prince to ascend his chariot.

SUMANTRA. Do thou also comply with the request of dear Chandraketu.

LAVA. What hesitation can there be in employing one's own implements ? But we are dwellers in the forest, unaccustomed to the management of chariots.

SUMANTRA. Thou knowest, my son, how to behave in accordance with pride and courtesy ; if moreover, Ramabhadra, the descendant of Ikshvaku, were to behold thee such as thou art, then his heart would gush with affection.

LAVA. Revered sir ! That royal sage is said to be a good man. (*with an expression of shame*) We indeed are not so badly disposed as to impede sacrifices ; moreover, who in this world does not greatly respect that king on account of his virtues ? Nevertheless, that speech of the guardians of the horse did indeed stir me to wrath because it fearfully insulted the whole warrior-tribe.

CHANDRAKETU (*smiling*). Dost thou feel impatience even at the excess of my father's glory ?

LAVA. Never mind whether I feel indignation or not. But I ask this question. Since we hear that the king of the race of Raghu possesses self-restraint—he is not himself insolent, nor does insolence spring among his subjects—how comes it that his men utter a speech fit only for Rakshasas ? The sages say, "the speech of the mad and the insolent is demoniacal ; that is the source of all enmities, for that is the bane of the world." In such words they blame that kind of

speech, but the other kind they praise. And wise men call that same speech which is true and agreeable, which yields the objects of desires like milk, which banishes misfortune, which produces fame, which destroys sin, the cow, the mother of prosperity.

SUMANTRA. This boy, the pupil of Valmiki, has a pure character and speaks what is proper with a purity of speech that belongs only to sages.

LAVA. But as to thy question, Oh Chandraketu—dost thou feel impatience at the excess of my father's glory—I have this to ask : are the virtues of the warrior caste restricted to one individual ?

SUMANTRA. Thou dost not know the king of the race of Ikshvaku. Therefore cease from asserting too much. Thou hast certainly displayed thy courage by the slaughter of the soldiers. But thou oughtest not to persist in the case of the subduer of Jamadagnya.

LAVA (*with a laugh*). Worthy sir ! Granted that the king is the subduer of Jamadagnya, what cause for boasting is there in this. Since it is a well-known fact that in speech consists the might of Brahmanas ; as to the might of the two arms, that belongs to Kshatriyas ; Jamadagnya who took weapons in hand was a Brahmana ; what praise to that king for subduing him ?

CHANDRAKETU (*with an air of agitation*). Worthy Sir ! have done with this exchange of words. This now is a new and wonderful incarnation of manliness, in whose eyes even the revered son of Bhrigu is no hero ; and who does not know the holy actions of my father, on account of which the ample boon of security was obtained by the seven worlds ?

LAVA. Why, who does not know the exploits and the greatness of the lord of Raghu's race ? Although something might be said—but I suppress it.—Those old men are people whose deeds are not to be scanned ; let them be. Why describe them ? They whose glory is undiminished even by the slaughter of the wife of Sunda are the great ones in the world. And these three steps which were taken in the battle with Khara, though not quite in retreat, and Rama's skill in subduing the son of Indra—on that head also people are well informed !

CHANDRAKETU. Oh thou hast broken through all bonds of decorum in reproaching my father, in truth thou protest over much.

LAVA. Ha ! he frowns even at me.

SUMANTRA. Their anger has blazed forth. Tremor produced by intense feeling agitates their knots of hair fastened up on their head ; their eyes, which are naturally a little red like the leaf of the pink lotus, spontaneously assume a fiery glow ; their faces, from the knitting of their eye-brows suddenly dancing, wear the beauty of the moon with its spots made prominent, or of a lotus over which bees are hovering.

THE PRINCES. Then let us go to a spot suitable for fighting.  
(*Exeunt Omnes*).

## ACT SIX

### *The Princes Recognized*

*(Enter a pair of resplendent Spirits in an aerial vehicle)*

VIDYA, THE MALE SPIRIT. Ha ! the valorous deeds of these two princes of the race of the sun who have suddenly engaged in a terrible combat, having the spirit of their warrior-caste kindled to a flame, to deeds that confound with amazement gods and demons ! My beloved, behold ! behold ! the marvellous combat goes on terrible to the worlds, stretching the bow on which the bells tinkle, producing a jingling sound, loud resounding on account of the end of the bow the big string of which is twanging, and so showering arrows unceasingly ! For the wonderful welfare of both the champions is sent forth, loud like that of a cloud, the booming of the celestial drum. Therefore let us discharge continually on both these heroes a rain of flowers the falling of which is charming on account of numerous and full-blown golden lotuses, which is lovely with the honey of a multitude of tender jewel-buds from the trees of the immortals.

FEMALE SPIRIT. But why has the heaven in a moment become

yellow as if from streaks of lightning suddenly flashing forth ?

VIDYĀ. What ! does there indeed today take place the opening of the lids of the eye of Siva set in his forehead, flashing forth with a brightness like that of the sun whirled round by the whirling of Tvashtri's wheel ? Ah ! I, perceive : Chandraketu, being provoked, has employed the unrivalled weapon which is presided over by the deity of fire. For at present the multitudes of heavenly cars have indeed fled with their banners and choweries singed and rendered variegated, while fire bearing the lustre of a new kimsuka flower burns this line of silken flag-cloths. Here has gone forth the sacred fire terrible from the sparks that are emitted with a sharp sound like that of the loud splitting of the fragments of the thunderbolt, and that fire is awful with a host of towering, fierce, greedy and bright flames. And vehement is its scorching heat on all sides ; therefore screening ' my beloved with my body I will go to a distance. (*Does so*).

FEMALE SPIRIT. Happily is the heat that had only partially affected me kept off from me, whose rolling eyes are half-closed from delight, by means of contact with the body of my lord, which is cool like a necklace of pure pearls, glossy, smooth and fleshy.

VIDYĀ. Ha ! what have I done ? A beloved person without doing any special act drives away sorrow by the joy he causes, for whoever has a dear friend, has a possession of inestimable value.

FEMALE SPIRIT. How is this ? The face of heaven is overcast with rainclouds like the neck of an intoxicated peacock, which are adorned with the play of streaks of lightning moving around with frequent and fitful flashes.

VIDYĀ. Ha ! ha ! this is indeed the power of the water weapon employed by prince Lava. What do I see ? The fire-weapon is quenched by the meeting of thousands of rain-showers continually flowing.

FEMALE SPIRIT. It delights me ! It delights me !

VIDYĀ. Oh ! oh ! Everything in excess is harmful ; for all creatures tremble, being thickly covered with darkness rendered dense by clouds hoarsely roaring with the tumult caused by a series of violent winds of the time of universal

destruction, as if they were struggling in the terrible cavernous jaws of Death opened to swallow the world at one gulp, as if they had entered the maw of Vishnu, all his senses being torpid in his sleep of devotion at the end of the eon. Bravo ! my child Chandraketu ! bravo ! opportunely hast thou discharged the weapon of the wind. The clouds though numerous have been dispersed somewhere by the wind, as real knowledge disperses the delusive appearances in Brahma.

FEMALE SPIRIT. My lord ! who now is this that, whirling round the lappet of his outer garment with hand uplifted in an agitated manner, having forbidden from afar with sweet and affectionate words the martial toil of these two princes, causes his car to descend between them ?

VIDYA (*observing*). This is the lord of the house of Raghu having returned from killing Sambuka. Having heard the calm words sent forth by the mighty hero and stopped their combat through respect for him, Lava is calmed and Chandraketu also is bending humbly. May prosperity befall the king by being united to his sons ! Therefore let us leave this place. (*Exeunt spirits. End of the prologue. Then enter Rama, with Lava and Chandraketu in a suppliant posture*).

RAMA (*descending from the car Pushpaka*). Oh ! Chandraketu, moon of the race of the sun, come quickly, and embrace me closely ; let the burning even of my heart be allayed by means of thy limbs cool like a lump of snow. (*Raising him up and embracing him with tears of affection*). Is it well with you, the wielder of celestial weapons ?

CHANDRAKETU. It is well with me now that I have fortunately come in contact with Lava, of wonderful exploits and charming presence. I, therefore, request that my father should look upon this warrior of straightforward valor with an equally affectionate eye as on me or even still more.

RAMA (*Observing Lava*). I am glad that this friend of my child is of very dignified, lovely and auspicious appearance. He seems to be the science of arms incarnated in corporeal form to deliver the worlds ; like the duty of Kshatriyas having assumed a body to protect the treasures of Vedas, like an assemblage of all the powers, or a collection of all the virtues, like the aggregate of the merit of the world standing outwardly manifest before us.

LAVA (*to himself*). Ha ! this great hero has pure majesty and appearance. He is the one great abiding place of security, affection and devotion, and the grace of supreme Duty, handsome in form. Oh wonder ! My enmity has ceased ; affection, blended deep with bliss, springs up ; that haughtiness departs, I know not where ; modesty makes me bend low ; having seen him, why am I in a moment subdued ? Or rather, the fact is that great men, like holy places, possess an inexplicable but priceless overcoming influence.

RAMA. Ha ! why is it that he on a sudden gives me rest from my grief and fills my heart with affection from some unknown cause ? Or rather to say, "affection has regard to obvious causes" is contradictory in itself. Some mysterious internal cause binds things together, and affections do not depend upon outward conditions ; for the lotus expands at the rising of the sun, and the moon-gem streams when the cold-rayed moon rises.

LAVA. Chandraketu ! who is this great personage ?

CHANDRAKETU. Dear friend, surely this is my revered father.

LAVA. Then according to duty he is mine also, for thou didst call me your dear friend. But there are four heroes of the story of the Ramayana that claim this title from thee ; so tell me something particular about him.

CHANDRAKETU. Know surely that this is the eldest of them.

LAVA (*joyfully*). What ! Is this the lord of the race of Raghu ? Auspiciously has this happy day dawned upon me, in that I have seen this king. (*Looking at him modestly but with eager curiosity*) Father ! Lava, the pupil of Valmiki, respectfully salutes thee.

RAMA (*affectionately*). Oh hero ! long mayst thou live ! Come hither (*embracing him affectionately*) My child ! away with this excessive modesty. Again and again fold me in a close embrace. Thy touch, thick, smooth and soft like the developed middle-leaf of a lotus which is full-blown, delights me, being cool like the nectar of the moon and the juice of sandalwood.

LAVA (*To himself*). Such disinterested affection he has for me ; while I, an ignorant fellow, have taken up arms to commit hostility against this very person. (*Loudly*) Let my father forgive the childish folly of Lava.

RAMA. What fault did my child commit ?

CHANDRAKETU. Having heard the proclamation of my father's exploits from the escort of the horse, he played the hero.

RAMA. Surely this is creditable to a Kshatriya. A man of valor cannot endure that the fame of the valor of others should be spread abroad ; such is his real and genuine character, which is not assumed because it has been so fixed by nature ; if the god, the author of day, burns unceasingly with his rays, why does the fire-stone vomit flames as if insulted ?

CHANDRAKETU. Intolerance also appears graceful in this great warrior alone. For let my father observe ; by means of the weapon of stupefaction employed by my dear friend, our armies are fixed motionless on every side.

RAMA. My dear Lava, let the weapon be withdrawn, and thou too, Chandraketu, comfort the forces bewildered on account of having been paralysed.

CHANDRAKETU. As you order. (*Exit*).

LAVA. Father, the missile has ceased to work.

RAMA. My child, these weapons which can only be employed and withdrawn by means of secret charms are handed down by tradition. The primeval seers, Brahma and others, having done penance for more than a thousand years for the welfare of the Vedas, saw these weapons as the manifestation of their own glories, the result of penance. Then the revered Krisasva told the secret knowledge of the whole lore of the mantras about these to Visvamitra, who has been his pupil for more than a thousand years, and that revered person communicated it to me. This was the previous order of teachers. And now I ask, how didst thou obtain it, noble youth ?

LAVA. The weapons revealed themselves to us two spontaneously.

RAMA (*Reflecting*). What cannot be possible ? Wonderful greatness may be caused by the ripening of exalted merit. But why dost thou use the words 'to us two ?'

LAVA. We are twin brothers.

RAMA. Where is that other brother ?

DANDAYANA (*behind the scenes*). Is there indeed a fight taking place between Lava, the long-lived one, and the soldiers of



the king, as the report goes ? What dost thou say ? 'friend, it is so.' Let the title of supreme lord today become extinct in the worlds ; and let the fires arising from the weapons of the Kshatriyas be extinguished.

RAMA. But who is this of a complexion dark-blue like sapphire, that by his very voice covers me with horripilation, making me thereby resemble a kadamba tree that puts forth buds at the moment of the deep roar of a fresh blue cloud ?

LAVA. This is that elder brother of mine, noble Kusa, who has returned from the hermitage of Bharata.

RAMA (*with admiration*). My child, call him of long life also here.

LAVA. So I will. (*He advances towards Kusa.*)

KUSA (*entering, brandishing his bow with emotion, delight and courage*). If there should be a fight with the kings of the solar race, who from the time of Manu, the son of Vivasvat, have offered to Indra the boon of protection, and kindled the fire of martial spirit to burn the haughty, then fortunate would be this bow, the string of which has lights waved round it by the fierce points of the flames that flash forth from the fiery arms. (*He advances with haughty strides*).

RAMA. There is a marvellous excess of heroism in this warrior boy. His look regards as straw the best prowess of the three worlds ; his gait firm and proud seems to bend down the earth ; even in boyhood he possesses massiveness like that of a mountain ; can it be the incarnation of the heroic sentiment or of pride hither advancing ?

LAVA (*Advancing*). Victory to my noble brother !

KUSA. Longlived one, what is this talk about a fight ?

LAVA. Oh, it is trifling matter. My revered brother, however, should give up his haughty bearing and behave modestly.

KUSA. For what reason ?

LAVA. Here stands the king, the lord of Raghu's race, and he shows affection to us two and is longing for thy approach.

KUSA (*reflecting*). That hero of the story of Ramayana, the protector of the Vedic treasure ?

LAVA. The same.

KUSA. That great man is one whose holy sight is to be desired, but I cannot conceive in what way he is to be approached by me.

LAVA. Just as we would approach our elders.

KUSA. How can this be ?

LAVA. The high-minded and courteous Chandraketu, the son of Urmila, out of friendship, addresses me with the title of a dear companion, therefore on account of my relations with him that royal sage becomes our father in duty or courtesy.

KUSA. In the present case humility though shown even to a Kshatriya is not blameable. (*Both walk about*).

LAVA. Let my noble brother behold this great hero, the excellence of whose various superhuman actions may be inferred from his form, majesty and serenity.

KUSA (*Observing*). Oh ! how gracious his form and how sanctifying his majesty ! Rightly did the bard of the Ramayana develop the goddess speech into the form of that poem. (*approaching*) Father, Kusa, the disciple of Prachetasa, salutes you.

RAMA. Come, come boy, long may you live ! Through affection I am eagerly longing to embrace your body, which is smooth and sleek like a cloud filled with water. (*Having embraced him, to himself*) Can this boy be my child ? For when I embrace him, he, as it were, bedews my body with a stream of nectareous fluid, as if he were the essence of my body produced from my affection and flowing forth from every limb, as if he were all my life standing without me, revealed in bodily form, as if he were created by the gushing of my heart agitated with deep joy.

LAVA. Father ! The sun is shining right on the forehead, therefore take a seat for a moment in the thick shade of this Sala tree.

RAMA. As my child likes. (*All walk about and sit down according to rank. Rama then speaking to himself*) Ha ! though the ways of Kusa and Lava are joined with modesty, their gait, their attitude, their manner of sitting, and so on, suggest imperial rank. And the charms of their beauty, which is natural and inseparable from their body, proclaim a grace attractive in every part, as her charming rays indicate the flawless moon or the drops of honey an expanded lotus. And I see in them abundantly manifested the beauty of the princes of the race of Raghu. Their body is dark-

blue like the neck of a full grown pigeon and has the well turned shoulders that resemble the neck of a bull ; their look is steady like that of a pleased lion, and their voice is deep like that of a drum rejoicing. (*Observing them carefully*). Ha ! not only does their form resemble mine, but various resemblances to the daughter of Janaka are noticeable in this pair of boys, for him who has requisite skill to mark them. Surely, that face of my darling, beautiful like a young lotus, has, as it were, again been submitted to my eyes. Here is the same stamp of the upper lip, beautiful with the gleam of teeth clean and white and the same fascinating ears, and although the eyes are red and blue, nevertheless there is in them the same virtue of beauty. (*Reflecting*)— This is that very forest, inhabited by Prachetasa, where indeed the queen was abandoned ; and this is their appearance and this their age and majesty. And the fact that the missiles disclosed themselves to them of their own accord makes me thus reflect. Can it be my permission to the missiles at the time of looking at the pictures that has taken effect ? For we have heard that the missiles did not pass without traditional instruction even among men of old time ; and moreover this exceeding joy of my heart gives assurance to my soul that is floating on doubts. That they are twins also greatly agrees with my own experience. For I have often marked that the queen in her pregnancy was blessed with twins. (*weeping*) For when the dove, that had already taken root, had grown with our familiarity, it was I who first perceived with the gentle touch of my palm the two-fold nature of the foetus in her womb as we were alone, she with her eyes closed from a sense of natural coyness though feeling perfectly at ease ; and it was after some days that she came to know herself. (*Having wept*) What then shall I ask these boys on some pretext ?

LAVA. Father, what does this mean ? A flood of tears has given to thy face, which gives prosperity to the worlds, the beauty of a dewbesprinkled lotus.

KUSA. Oh my dear brother ! Of course without the queen Sita what must not be a source of grief to the lord of Raghus ; for, truly, the whole world becomes a wilderness on the loss of the beloved ; and that love he felt was so great, and this

separation also is endless ; why dost thou ask such a question as if thou hadst not studied the Ramayana ?

RAMA (*To himself*). Oh they talk with indifference. Enough of questions. Foolish heart, what means this sudden unsteady emotion of thine ? Having thus revealed the agitation of my heart, I have become an object of pity even to the boys. Well ! I shall change the topic. (*Aloud*) My children, there is a poem called Ramayana, the outpouring of the learning of the revered Valmiki, the panegyric of the race of the sun ; I wish out of curiosity to hear a little of it.

KUSA. The whole of that composition has been studied by us. Now there recur to my memory these two verses in the last canto of the part that describes Rama's boyhood.

RAMA. My darlings, repeat them.

KUSA. "Sita was naturally dear to the high-souled Rama ; but that dearness she increased by her own virtues ; in the same way Rama was dearer even than life to Sita, but their hearts alone knew their mutual affection."

RAMA. Ah ! very terrible is the shock to my inmost heart. Ah ! my queen, it was even so. Ha ! ha ! the incidents of worldly life, unpleasant through sudden reverses and ending in the grief of separation, afflict us. Where now is the great delight abounding in the most intimate confidences ? Where that mutual love and where the deep emotions full of admiration for each other and where that union of hearts in joy or sorrow ? Nevertheless this life of mine still throbs ; and the wretchedness does not cease. Oh, pity ! I have been forced to remember the time, though it is painful to remember, which was charming because of the wonderful disclosing at one and the same moment of the thousand virtues of my beloved. When the bud-like breasts of the fawn-eyed one that had just made their appearance expanded a little after some days ; a time when love, deep by the combination of youth, affection and desire, throbbed saucily in the heart but bashfully in outward demeanor !

LAVA. And this is a verse spoken by Rama to Sita when they were sporting on the banks of the river Mandakini and in the forest of Chitrakuta. "This slab of stone in front of us was placed as if for thy sake round which this Kesara tree has as it were rained flowers."

RAMA (*Smiling with an expression of shame, affection and sorrow*).

Boys are exceedingly innocent, especially those who live in a forest. Ha Queen ! dost thou remember that place which witnessed the intimate confidence of that time ? I see as it were before me thy face, becoming cool by means of the dews of fatigue, gleaming with the moon-like forehead, which is overspread with curls agitated by the gently moving breeze of the Mandakini, the cheeks of which are radiant though not dyed with saffron, beautiful with fascinating ears, which are charming even in the absence of ornament. (*Remains as if petrified ; then piteously*) What wonder ho ! By long and repeated brooding one creates and places in front one that is dear ; surely even though far off a dear person does thus produce consolation ; but certainly the world is a withered desert when one's wife is dead ; then the heart is scorched as if in a heap of burning husks.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Vasishtha, Valmiki, the queens of 'Dasaratha, and also Janaka, together with Arundhati terrified all of them at hearing of the quarrel of the boys, are coming near, tardily on account of their limbs weakened from old age and also on account of the distance of the hermitage ; though eager in spirit, slow from fatigue.

RAMA. What ! Revered Arundhati, Vasishtha, my mothers and Janaka too, all here ! O ! ill luck ! How can I see them. (*Looking forth sadly*) Ah ! the news that father Janaka has by chance come to this very place is a stroke of the thunder-bolt to me, an unlucky being. I beheld that meeting of the two fathers on the auspicious festal occasion of their children's marriage, at which Vasishtha and others were present, delighted by the desirableness of the connection ; and now I who am in this plight witness my father's friend after such a strange calamity has occurred ; why am I not cleft in a thousand fragments ? But what can Rama do ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ah ! ah ! oh pity ! Having suddenly beheld the lord of Raghu's race in such a state with his splendor subsisting in majesty only, after recalling Janaka to life, who swooned first, the mothers in their distress are themselves falling into a swoon.

RAMA. Ah my father ! Ah my mother ! Ah Janaka ! Your pity is thrown away upon me, wretch that I am, for I showed

no pity to her who summed up in herself the whole blessedness of the families of Raghu and Janaka. I will, however, pay my respects to them. (*With these words he rises*).

KUSA AND LAVA. This way, father, this way. (*They walk round overpowered with feeling. Exeunt omnes.*)

## ACT SEVEN

### *The Reunion*

(*Enter Lakshmana*)

LAKSHMANA. Well ! well ! surely the revered Valmiki having summoned together with us the people including Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, citizens and country-people, by his power has placed here the whole world of creatures movable and immovable, consisting of the host of the chiefs of the gods, demons, animals and serpents. I also have received a command from my noble brother in these words : "Dear Lakshmana ! we are invited by the revered Valmiki to behold his own composition being acted by Asparasas, therefore go to the theatre on the bank of the Ganges and seat the spectators." And I have seated the whole assemblage of mortals and immortals in their proper places. But here comes my noble brother, in this very direction, out of respect of Valmiki, he who has undertaken the difficult vow of a hermit, though still inhabiting a kingdom for a hermitage. (*Enter Rama*).

RAMA. Dear Lakshmana, have the spectators and judges taken their seats ?

LAKSHMANA. Yes.

RAMA. But these two boys, Kusa and Lava, should receive as much respect as may be shown to dear Chandraketu.

LAKSHMANA. I have already acted accordingly, knowing full well your Majesty's love towards them. But here is the royal seat spread out ; let my noble brother sit down on it. (*Rama sits down*).

LAKSHMANA. Ho ! let the play begin.

SUTRADHARA (*Entering*). Here ; here ! the revered Valmiki, who speaketh truth, thus commands the animate and the inanimate world. "Here is that sanctifying and sweet composition which I, perceiving with the prophetic eye of a sage, composed full of sentiments of pathos and wonder ; you should be attentive to it on account of the importance of the matter."

RAMA. This is the meaning of what has been said. Sages have an intuitive perception of duty. The knowledge of these revered men is unaffected by passion and is a receptacle of truth, is in no case baffled, and therefore it should never be doubted.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Ah noble Lord ! Ah prince Lakshmana ! Here I am alone—helpless—the time of my delivery being near—hopeless—and the wild beasts long to devour me ; therefore I now—wretched woman—will throw myself into the Bhagirathi.

LAKSHMANA (*to himself*). Ah ! this is something quite unexpected.

SUTRADHARA. The queen, the daughter of the earth, deserted in the great forest by the king, throws herself into the goddess Ganga, in the throes of child-birth. (*Exit. End of the prologue.*)

RAMA (*with emotion*). Queen ! queen ! care for Lakshmana.

LAKSHMANA. My lord, this is a play.

RAMA. Ah ! queen ! my dear companion in my sojourn in the Dandaka wood ! This calamity has befallen you on account of Rama.

LAKSHMANA. My noble brother will just look at the performance.

RAMA. Here I am ready, hard as adamant. (*Then Sita enters supported by Earth and Ganga, each of them holding a boy in her lap*). Dear Lakshmana, I seem to enter some unknown and sudden gloom. Support me !

THE TWO GODDESSES. Take heart, oh blessed one, thou art highly favored with good fortune, oh princess of Videha ; within the water thou hast given birth to two sons, who shall uphold the race of Raghu.

SITA (*regaining herself*). Happily I have given birth to two sons. Ah ! my lord ! (*She faints*).

LAKSHMANA (*Falling at Rama's feet*). My noble brother ! We are blessed with good fortune. The race of Raghu has budded auspiciously. (*Observing*) Ah ! ah ! my noble brother has fainted, overwhelmed with the flood of tears that burst forth. (*He fans him*).

PRITHIVI. •Child, take heart.

SITA (*regaining herself*). Revered one, who are you ? Leave me.

PRITHIVI. This is Bhagirathi, the tutelary goddess of thy father-in-law's family.

SITA. Revered goddess, my homage to you !

BHAGIRATHI. Obtain the auspicious fortune befitting your virtuous life.

LAKSHMANA. We are highly blessed.

BHAGIRATHI. (*beholding*). This is your mother, Earth.

SITA. Ah ! mother, you have seen me in this plight.

PRITHIVI. Come, my darling, come, my daughter ! (*Both faint having embraced each other*).

LAKSHMANA (*Joyfully*). Fortunately the noble queen has come favored by Ganga and Prithivi.

RAMA (*beholding*). As fate would have it, this is still more pathetic.

BHAGIRATHI. All triumphant is maternal affection, since even the all-supporting Earth grieves. Or rather common to all is this thread of life which has the knot of infatuation of mind, and a source of misfortune to sentient beings. Goddess Earth, Oh princess of Videha, take comfort !

PRITHIVI. Goddess, having given birth to Sita how can I take heart ? There was her long stay in the midst of the Rakshasas ; secondly her exile is utterly unbearable

BHAGIRATHI. Who indeed can bar the doors of destiny when it is just ripening in the case of a certain individual ?

PRITHIVI. Revered Bhagirathi ! But all this is quite unbecoming on the part of your dear Rama. He showed no regard for the hand which he, as a youth, had firmly seized in boyhood ; nor did he show any for me nor for Janaka, nor for fire, nor for the dutiful conduct of Sita, nor for his offspring.

SITA. Ah ! I am reminded of my noble lord.

PRITHIVI. Ah, what is your noble lord to you now ?



SITA (*with a blush and with tears*). Or rather, it is as my mother says.

RAMA. Mother Earth ! I am even such an one as thou sayest.

BHAGIRATHI. Revered Earth, you are the very body of the world. Why then do you get angry with him as if you did not know him well ? A terrible scandal was spread abroad among the people, and as for that purification by the fiery ordeal, as it took place in the island of Lanka, how can men here be expected to believe in it ? This is the precious family inheritance of the race of Ikshvaku that the whole world is to be kept contented ; hence in such difficulty what was that darling to do ?

LAKSHMANA. Surely the divinities have an unobstructed knowledge of the minds of creatures.

GANGA. Nevertheless I here fold my hands to you.

RAMA. Mother ! Thou hast continued thy favor to the house of Bhagiratha.

PRITHIVI. Goddess, I am always favorably inclined towards you. But I speak thus on account of the rush of affection that is unbearable at first. Not that I am unaware of Rama's love for Sita. Having abandoned darling Sita through the power of fate, with tortured mind he lives only by his extraordinary courage and the merit of his subjects.

RAMA. Surely elders are kind to children.

SITA (*weeping and with folded hands*). Let my mother absorb me into her own self !

RAMA. What else could she say ?

BHAGIRATHI. Heaven forbid ! Mayest thou live for thousands of years without being absorbed.

PRITHIVI. Daughter ! you have to take care of your sons.

SITA. I am helpless without my lord. What have I to do with these orphans ?

RAMA. My heart, thou art adamant.

BHAGIRATHI. How canst thou be without a protector since thou hast a husband ?

SITA. Of what worth is my state of having a lord, a wretched woman as I am !

THE TWO GODDESSES. How canst thou undervalue thyself, the world's blessing, by association with whom the purity even of us twain is increased ?

SITA. Why is the whole heaven filled with tumult, thus in a blaze ?

THE TWO GODDESSES. Ah, we see it. These very weapons, of which Krisasva, Kausika and Rama have successively been the masters, are manifesting themselves with the *Jrimbhakas*.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Queen Sita, we salute thee ; thy sons are our resort, Rama having given us to them at the time of looking at the painting.

SITA. Happily these are the presiding deities of the weapons. Ah, my lord, your favors shine upon us even now.

LAKSHMANA. My noble brother had said that they would by all means wait upon her offspring.

THE TWO GODDESSES. A bow to you, mighty weapons ! Blessed are we by your favor ! You should wait upon the boys when meditated upon in the hour of need May you fare well !

RAMA. The waves of grief broken by the confluence of astonishment and joy, being agitated, make my condition wonderful.

THE TWO GODDESSES. Rejoice, daughter ! rejoice ! Thy sons have now become equal to Ramabhadra.

SITA. Revered ones ! who shall perform for these the ceremonies necessary for Kshatriyas ?

RAMA. Lo ! Sita gladdens the race of the Raghavas protected by Vasishtha, ah ! even she does not find one to perform the sacraments for her sons.

BHAGIRATHI. My daughter, why do you trouble yourself with this thought ? When these boys are weaned I will entrust them to the venerable Valmiki who will perform the rites for them that are necessary in the case of Kshatriyas. Valmiki is even like the two sages, Vasishtha and Angirasa, being the preceptor of both the families, that of Raghu and that of Janaka.

RAMA. It is well thought of by the revered one.

LAKSHMANA. My noble brother, I tell the truth ; I recognize the boys Kusa and Lava as thy sons by these several characteristics. For these two, possessing the mystic missiles from their birth, of heroic nature, both residing with Valmiki, both resembling the noble one in their features, are now twelve years old.

RAMA. In consideration that these two are my sons my heart waves to and fro and I am stupified.

PRIVITHI. Come my daughter, sanctify by thy presence the regions below the earth.

RAMA. Ah my dearest, thou art gone to another world.

SITA. Let my mother take me to a long rest in her bosom. I am not able to endure the terrible humiliation in the world of living beings.

RAMA. What will the answer be ?

PRITHIVI. I bid thee wait until thy two sons are weaned, afterwards I shall do as it shall seem proper to me.

GANGA. So be it. (*Exeunt the two Deities with Sita.*)

RAMA. What ! has the vanishing of Sita actually taken place ? Ah queen ! Ah dear companion in my sojourn in the forest of Dandaka ! ah goddess of virtue ! Art thou gone to another world ? (*He swoons*).

LAKSHMANA. Help, revered Valmiki ! Is this the object of thy poem ?

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Remove the musical instruments ! O creatures, including both animate and inanimate ones, mortals and immortals, behold now a holy miracle ordained by the great sage, the venerable Valmiki.

LAKSHMANA (*Observing*). The water of the Ganga is agitated as if churned, and the sky is crowded with divine sages. Wonderful ! the noble queen together with the goddesses Ganga and Earth rises from the water.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Arundhati, adorable to the world, do a favor to us, Ganga and Earth ; we offer to thee Sita thy daughter-in-law of holy vows.

LAKSHMANA. Oh ! marvel ! marvel ! Look ! look my noble brother ! (*observing*) Ah, even now my lord does not come to himself. (*Enter Arundhati and Sita.*)

ARUNDHATI. Hasten dear princess of Videha, abandon thy natural bashfulness ; come, recall to life my darling with hand of which the touch is gentle.

SITA (*Touching in an agitated manner*). Let my lord recover consciousness.

RAMA (*Coming to himself and with joy*). Ha ! what is this ? (*After beholding the queen with joy and astonishment*). What, the queen ! (*bashfully*) my mother, Arundhati, and all the

revered ones, together with Rishyasringa and Santa, rejoicing.  
ARUNDHATI. My son, here is the tutelary deity of the house of Bhagiratha, the propitious Ganga.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Lord of the world, Rama, remember thy words to me when thou wast looking at the picture : "Do thou, Oh mother, think kindly upon Sita, even as Arundhati behaves to her daughter-in-law." In this respect I have paid my debt.

ARUNDHATI. There is thy mother-in-law, the revered Earth.

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). As thou didst say, Oh prince of long life, when thou didst abandon my darling Sita : "Oh revered mother Earth, take care of thy worthy daughter Janaki." I have now performed the command of my dear son and lord.

RAMA. How is it that I, a great sinner, have been pitied by the two revered goddesses ? I bow to you.

LAKSHMANA. Let the noble one hear !

RAMA. Let the people hear ! (*Noise behind the scenes*). Something still more strange.

ARUNDHATI. Ho ! ho ! citizens and country-people, may this queen Sita, daughter-in-law of the race of the sun, sprung from sacrificial ground, who has been committed to me, Arundhati, with such words of praise by the revered Ganga and Earth, and whose chaste behavior was formerly established by the adorable fire, and who was praised by the immortals together with Brahma, be received or not ? What think you, worthy men ?

LAKSHMANA. The subjects, having been thus scolded by the revered Arundhati, and the whole collection of creatures do obeisance to the noble queen, and the guardians of the world and the seven sages worship her with showers of flowers.

ARUNDHATI. Rama, lord of earth ! Appoint according to law thy beloved, the sanctifying original of the golden image, as fellow worshipper with thee in the sacrifice.

SITA (*To herself*). My lord knows how to remove Sita's grief.

RAMA. As the revered one commands.

LAKSHMANA. I have attained the desired object.

SITA. I am restored to life.

LAKSHMANA. Noble queen ! here the shameless Lakshmana bows to you.

SITA. May you live long, you who are like my son to me.

ARUNDHATI. Revered Valmiki, let Kusa and Lava, the sons of good Rama, born of Sita's womb, be presented now.

RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. Fortunately it was as we thought.

SITA (*overwhelmed with tears*). Where then are my sons ?  
(*Then enter Valmiki and Kusa and Lava*).

VALMIKI. Dear boys, Kusa and Lava ! here is Rama your father, Lakshmana, your youngest uncle, the queen Sita, your mother, here is the royal sage Janaka, your maternal grandfather !

SITA (*Looking with joy, feeling and wonder*). What ! my father !

KUSA AND LAVA. Oh father ! Oh mother ! Oh grandfather !

RAMA and LAKSHMANA (*embracing with joy*). Indeed, boys, you have been obtained with merit.

SITA. Come, son Kusa, come son Lava, after a long time, embrace your mother, who had gone to another world.

KUSA AND LAVA (*having done so*). We are blessed.

SITA. Revered one, I bow to you.

VALMIKI. Daughter, mayest thou continue in thy present state of happiness !

SITA. Oh joy ! Here I see my father, our family preceptor, the elderly matrons, the noble Santa with her husband, my revered lord, together with Lakshmana, graciously disposed, and with them all Kusa and Lava ; so I am overpowered with joy. (*A confused noise behind the scenes*).

VALMIKI (*Rising and observing*). Oh, the lord of Madhura, Satrugna, has arrived after having killed Lavana.

LAKSHMANA. Good fortunes come in a train.

RAMA. Though experiencing all this, I cannot believe it ; or such is the nature of prosperous events.

VALMIKI. Speak, dear Rama ! What further service can I do to please thee ?

RAMA. Can there be anything further to be wished for ? But let there be this benediction. This story purifies from sins and increases blessings, being auspicious and charming like the mother of the world and like Ganga ; may wise men reflect over this poem of the poet of ripe wisdom, who knows Brahma revealed in the form of words, while its nature is brought out by acting. (*Exeunt omnes*)

HARSHA

*Nagaranda*

TRANSLATED BY

PALMER BOYD

## INTRODUCTION

HARSHA, the poet and dramatist, was king of Sthanvicvara and Kanyakubja, reigning approximately from 606 to 648 A. D. Thus he flourished more than two centuries after Kalidasa and more than half a century before Bhavabhuti. His three extant plays have stylistically much in common so that he may be said, perhaps, more conspicuously than any other Sanskrit playwright, to have possessed a definite type of imagination. This is by no means to say that his works show high originality, which they do not, but only that he well appraised his own abilities as poet and is not known to have stepped far out of the area which these enclose. His kingship seems fitting to his practice of literature, for possibly more than any other group of Sanskrit plays his works possess qualities commonly discovered in courtly verse, namely lightness, sophistication, wit, artificiality, and grace. Even for representative Sanskrit plays they seem highly derivative. Yet, they still have a certain freshness and charm and one of them, that selected here, deviates considerably in an important part of its subject-matter from the usual materials of the Sanskrit theatre. *Nagananda*, commencing primarily as a slight, sentimental comedy of amoristic intrigue, concludes with forthright expression of Buddhistic ideals. The waning energy unmistakable throughout his playwriting causes the specimen chosen here to be given last place in this volume. The work is included, however, not only for the sake of its own charm but in view of the interest of its concluding theme and its unusualness in Indian drama, though it admirably embodies ideas of the highest importance for Indian culture as a whole.

*Nagananda* is actually not the most celebrated of its author's works. This debatable honor falls to *Ratnavati*, or *The Necklace*, an exceptionally adroit drama with primarily amoristic coloring. Characters and several of the situations cleave excessively close to theatrical conventions. There is the amorous hero, king Vatsa; the scheming chancellor, Yaugandharayana; the jealous queen, Vasavadatta; and the decep-

tively passive heroine. All four, it will be recalled, are figures in Bhasa's plays but all have suffered an attenuation or deterioration at Harsha's hands. No parody, of course, is intended, but parallelisms and dilutions occur. Decidedly rococo touches are also visible. A parrot reveals the heroine's secrets by chattering her words to the king. With an intrigue remarkably like that of the *Figaro*, the heroine plots to disguise herself as the queen; the queen discovers her plan, arrives early in the garden, and receives the advances of the king, who mistakes her for his new love. Later, when the heroine is about to hang herself from desperation, the king, mistaking her disguise, prevents her under the supposition that she is the queen. A fire in the palace, that occasions a particularly exciting moment, strongly resembles a well-known convention in European opera. But this fire is actually an illusion caused by magic. To these rococo elements may be added the neo-classical. Quite in the Plautan manner, the heroine first appears not as the princess that she really is but merely as an unfortunate maiden rescued from a shipwreck. The connotation of her name suggests also Shakespeare's "Marina". The necklace is a familiar device to aid her ultimate identification. More particularly in the Indian plan of play-plotting, the discovery of Ratnavali's princely birth and her blood-relation to the queen allays the queen's jealousy and fully reconciles her to the girl's position as one more queen in Vatsa's spacious household. Also in Indian story-telling tradition is the prophecy that whoever marries Ratnavali will rule the entire earth. More than one queen in Indian drama looks with favor on such a fortune for her husband, gladly allowing him a love-affair that produces so desirable a result. This play is really a patch-work of theatrical clichés yet so skilfully contrived that it has long been among the most popular of Indian works for the stage. Unhappily, much as Ratnavali complies so narrowly with well-established theatrical tradition, Harsha's other courtly comedy, *Priyadarcika*, in turn repeats much of *Ratnavali*. Vatsa is again destined to marry a maiden after overcoming the stubborn opposition of Queen Vasavaddatta. A scene with a mischievous bee echoes its original in *Shakuntala*. At least more stimulating and progressive is an episode of a play-within-a-play, in which the queen suspects



the actors of real instead of feigned courtship. But this, too, is a derivative work of secondary value.

Such disparaging criticism cannot be justly made of *Nagananda*. The early scenes, to be sure, prove still somewhat slight and in no vital respect unusual. A prince falls in love with a princess while remaining ignorant of her identity. She is also enamored of him at first sight. His love for her she discovers by a picture of herself which he has drawn. They meet in a sacred grove. Despair temporarily overcomes the prince when he hears that his marriage to the princess is being required of him; but, of course, when he discovers that the very girl whom he already desires is in reality the princess in question, all problems appear solved. Gay activities precede the royal wedding, including feasting and a ceremonial bath. The young girl's reluctance heightens the prince's amorous mood. Affairs are as they should be. Then, suddenly, a totally new chain of events occurs. The play becomes frankly religious.

For this change, less alarming to Indian philosophy and aesthetics than to Western, some artful preparation has nevertheless been made. The prince, together with his father, has been described as pious and even ascetic. The chief action has taken place in a "penance-grove," though the picture so much more nearly resembles a garden of love. Moreover, the prince is surprisingly careless of his worldly welfare. When informed that his kingdom is at first threatened and later conquered, he shows not the slightest concern. He is off on a holiday pilgrimage to a delectable mountain. Practical affairs he no more heeds than his licentious friend, the *Vidushaka*, or clown. His confirmed dedication to religion appears for the first time, however, in events immediately following his marriage and is psychologically, no doubt, associated with it. While walking by the shore with a friend, he sees a mountain of accumulated bones. These are the bones of the *nagas*, dead snakes daily consumed by Geruda, the vulture of devastation. A mother-snake and her son, anthropomorphically represented, appear, the son being the victim appointed for this very day. Convinced of the supreme importance of self sacrifice and the horror of all violence, the prince at once offers himself in place of the youth. He requests

his scarlet wedding robe as the vestment proper in his sacrificial ritual. At this point the symbolism reaches its highest mark. The ravenous bird does actually seize the prince and slays him. On so doing, however, he becomes so deeply moved by the spectacle of sacrifice that he repents of his evil and forever renounces his sinister practices. The goddess appears out of the sky, quite in classical fashion, and with Geruda, brings to life not only the dead prince but all the *nagas*, or snakes, slain in the past. All is as though evil has not been. The lovers are reunited and even the lost kingdom is restored.

Little or nothing of the deep tragic tone and seriousness of the greatest of Indian drama can be found in Harsha's *Nagananda*. Yet it is actually rich in pathos, beauty, grace, and a sincere, though not profound nor highly emotional, expression of religious faith. Lofty matters are treated with gentleness through no lack of conviction but apparently through a confidence that insistence and stridency are needless in defense of so perspicuous a truth. Why should not a gospel of mercy and peace be promulgated with quietness and charm? The horror of evil is vividly presented but not allowed to predominate. *Nagananda* is a spiritual work, well worthy of being praised and cherished, a thoughtful study of various levels of love. In the end the sacrificial hero might exclaim : no man hath greater love than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. His idealism might extend even further. To the prince the young *yaga* is a total stranger. His deed is in reality performed for all humanity, and even for all living things. Such is the concluding precept of India's religious idealism. Over and beyond the agony is a conception of religious joy.

# *Nagananda*

## *Persons in the Play*

JIMUTAVAHANA, prince of the Vidyadharas or celestial choristers

JIMUTAKETU, his father, king of the Vidyadharas

VISVAVASU, king of the Siddhas

MITRAVASU, his son

SANKHACHUDA, a prince of the Nagas or snake deities

GARUDA, king of the birds and mortal foe of the Nagas

ATREYA, a Brahman, the vidushaka or king's jester.

THE VITA, or parasite

SUNANDA, the doorkeeper

The Chamberlain

A Slave

A Naga attendant

The Goddess GAURI

The Queen of the Vidyadharas, mother of Jimutavahana

MALAYAVATI, daughter of Visvavasu

CHATURIKA, her attendant

Sankhachuda's mother

Several female attendants

The scene lies partly in the Palace of the Siddha King, and partly on the Mountains of Malabar.

## PROLOGUE

### *Benediction*

“Of whom dost thou think, putting on a pretence of religious abstraction, yet opening for an instant thine eyes? See! savior though thou art, thou dost not protect us, sick with the shafts of Love, Falsely art thou

compassionate. Who is more cruel than thou ?"—May Buddha, the conquerer, who was thus jealously addressed by the nymphs of Mara, protect you ! May the Lord of Munis protect you ! who, lost in reflection, and filled with transcendent knowledge, was seen to be utterly unmoved by Indra, whose every hair was on end through astonishment, by the Siddhas, their heads bent low in obeisance; by the nymphs, whose eyes quivered, as they alternately smiled, yawned, trembled, and frowned; by the heroes of Mara, dancing with harshly-beaten drums; and by Mara himself, who had drawn his bow to the full !

STAGE MANAGER (*At the conclusion of the benediction*). Enough of this prolixity. Today, at the feast of Indra, I was thus addressed by the company of kings, who have arrived from various countries, dependants on the lotus feet of the noble King Sri Harsha Deva, after they had summoned me respectfully, "That play named *Nagananda*, connected with the sovereign of the celestial choristers, and adorned with a new arrangement of the incidents by our Lord, Sri Harsha Deva, has been heard by us through successive report, but has never been seen by us on the stage; therefore you should perform it today with suitable dramatic appliances, both through your respect for that great king, who rejoices the hearts of all people, and through your willingness to oblige us." Therefore, after I have adjusted my attire, I will carry out this request. (*Walking and looking about.*) I have no doubt that I have won the hearts of all the spectators, since Sri Harsha Deva is a clever poet; and this assembly are good judges of merit. The history of the king of the Siddhas is very attractive in the world, and we ourselves are skilful actors. Each of these things by itself would be sufficient for success; how much more the whole assemblage of them, brought together by my accumulation of good luck ! So, after I have gone to my house and called my wife, I will commence the entertainment. (*Walking about, looking towards the tiring room.*) Here is my house. I will enter. (*After entering*) O lady, come here a moment !

AN ACTRESS (*entering in tears*). My Lord, here am I, unlucky one that I am, let the son of my lord say what is to be done.

MANAGER (*looking at Actress*). O lady, why do you thus weep

unreasonably, when the *Nagananda* is to be performed ?

ACTRESS. Sir, how should I not weep, since just now my father, having discovered that he is old, and influenced by a sudden disgust for the world, saying to himself, "Art thou fit to support the duties of a household?" is gone with his wife to a sacred grove ?

MANAGER (*in distraction*). What ! How ! My two parents, leaving me, are gone to a sacred grove ? What is now seemly to be done ? (*After thinking*) But how shall I remain at home, giving up the pleasure of attendance on my father ? For, in order to perform the service of my father, I will quit the possessions fallen to my lot, and go off this day to the forest, as did Jimutavahana. (*Exeunt*).

## ACT ONE

(*Enter Jimutavahana and the Vidushaka*).

JIMUTAVAHANA (*in a tone of apathy towards the world*). O friend, Atreya, well do I know that youth is an abode of passion. I am certain that it is transient. Who in the world does not know that it is averse to investigation of right and wrong ? Yet, worthless as it is, it may still be used for the attainment of the desired end, if it is thus spent by me, devotedly obeying my parents.

VIDUSHAKA (*with vexation*). Alas, my friend, no wonder you are despondent, enduring the annoyance of living so long a time in the forest, for the sake of these two, who are already half dead. So now do me a favor. Having turned aside from the strictness of your attendance on your father, let the pleasure of sovereignty, sweet through the attainment of every wish, be tasted by you.

JIMUTAVAHANA. O friend, you speak not well. For, in this world, what is the splendor of one sitting on a throne compared with that of one in attendance on his father ? What enjoyment is there to a king such as that of one shampooing his father's feet ? What satisfaction in enjoying the whole world, such as in eating a father's leavings ? Sovereignty is

in fact only a trouble to one who has deserted his father. Is there one good thing in it ?

VIDUSHAKA (*aside*). Bother his penchant for waiting on his father ! (*After considering*). Never mind. I will put it to him in this way. (*Aloud*.) O friend, I do not in truth speak only of the enjoyment of sovereignty. There is another thing which you should do.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*smiling*). O friend, has not all that should have been done, been done ? See here. My subjects are placed in the right path; the virtuous are happy; my relatives are placed on an equality with myself, and a regency is made in the kingdom; to the poor man a tree of Paradise has been given, whose fruit gives even more than he wishes for. Say, what more than this should be done ? or what remains in your mind ?

VIDUSHAKA. O friend, your enemy, the base Matanga, is very daring; and, whilst he is at hand, the kingdom, though duly governed by the prime minister, does not, in your absence, appear very firmly settled.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Fie ! O fool, dost thou fear that Matanga will seize the kingdom ?

VIDUSHAKA. What else ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. If even it were so, why should it not be ? Is not all I possess, even to my very body, kept for the benefit of others ? That it is not given up to him of my own accord is through compliance with my father. What, then is the use of this pointless consideration ? Better that the command of my father be at once undertaken. "O my child Jimutavahana," he said, "by the spending of many days here this place has its flowers, kusa-grass, and fuel used up, and its rice, plants, fruits, and roots well-nigh consumed, therefore go hence to Malaya mountain, and seek there for a hermitage suited for our occupation." Come, then, let us go to the Malaya mountain.

VIDUSHAKA. Whatever your highness orders. Let your highness come.

(*Both walk about*).

VIDUSHAKA (*looking in advance*). O friend ! see, see ! Here in good truth comes the wind from Malaya, which removes the fatigue of the journey, like the clasp of the neck of

the long-desired loved one on first meeting,—bearing cool showers of drops, caught up from the cascade as it falls broken from the crystal rocks, and strongly fragrant through its contact with the mountain slopes, covered with groves of dense and juicy sandal trees; it thrills every limb of your body.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking with surprise*). Ah ! we have already reached the Malaya hill. (*Looking all round.*) Oh, how pleasant it is ! Inasmuch as this Malaya hill, with its sandal exuding from the wounds made by the mighty elephants as they rub their cheeks in their passion against the trunks, and with the fastnesses of its caves resounding when lashed by the ocean waves, and with its rocks of pearl stained by the foot-dye of the women of the Siddhas as they pass—the sight of it gives to my mind some longing for the joys of earth. Come, we will ascend and seek for some suitable site for a hermitage.

VIDUSHAKA. Let us do so. (*Standing in advance.*) Let your highness come on. (*They ascend.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*starting from a throbbing of his right eye*). My right eye throbs, though I have no object of desire. Yet the saying of the wise cannot prove false. What, then, can this portend ?

VIDUSHAKA. It shows undoubtedly that some loved object is at hand.

JIMUTAVAHANA. It must be as you say..

VIDUSHAKA (*looking on all sides*). O friend, look ! look ! Here in good truth is all the appearance of an ascetic grove, resplendent with unusually thick and dense trees, its crowd of young animals reclining at ease unalarmed, and its smoke freely issuing laden with scent from the sacrificial ghee.

JIMUTAVAHANA. You conjecture rightly. This is an ascetic rove. The bark of the trees is stripped off for clothing, though not in too wide strips, as if out of pity for them. The pure water of the cascade has broken fragments of old water-pots just visible at the bottom ; and here and there appear the broken girdles of munja grass cast off by the young Brahmans, whilst a verse of the Sama Veda is recited by a parrot, who has learnt it from constantly hearing it. Come, then, we will enter and look about us. (*They enter.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking about, with astonishment*). Oh, the tranquil charms of an ascetic grove ! The basins at the foot of the young trees are kept full by the daughters of the hermits. Its fuel is cut fresh and fresh by the reciting pupils, whilst the detail of the doubtful passages of the Veda is constantly discussed by the Munis, who delight in the task. Even these trees, taught respect for a guest, seem to utter a sweet welcome with the murmur of bees, and make, so to speak, an obeisance of their heads bowed down with fruit ; sprinkling a rain of flowers, they present me, as it were, a propitiatory offering. Hence this ascetic grove is well suited for a dwelling place. I think we shall have peace while living here.

VIDUSHAKA. What is this, friend ? The deer, with their necks a little bent, the mouthfulls of darbha grass falling half-chewed from their motionless mouths, their eyes tranquilly closed in complete content, seem to listen with one ear pricked up.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*after listening*). Friend, you have seen correctly ; for these antelopes, their bodies bent sideways, stopping the noise of chewing the mouthfulls of darbha grass between their teeth, listen to the distinct melodious words of a song, possessing, through due regard to the laws of harmony, the treble and bass tones impartially developed from their respective organs, mingled with the notes of the strings of the resounding lute, as with the hum of bees.

VIDUSHAKA. Who, then, my friend, sings here in the sacred grove ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. Inasmuch as these notes sound clearly, struck by the tips of soft fingers, I conjecture that it is sung with Kakili, the cuckoo-sound, for its key-note. (*Pointing forwards with his finger.*). In this temple some goddess plays the lute in propitiation of a deity.

VIDUSHAKA. Come, friend, let us too see the temple of the god.

JIMUTAVAHANA. You say well. The gods should be revered. (*Going up quickly, stopping.*) But perhaps we are not worthy to look. Let us then enter this tamala shrub, and wait for an opportunity. (*They do so. Then enter seated on the ground by the drawing of a curtain, Malayavati, and a Servant Girl, playing the lute.*)



MALAYAVATI (*sings*). O adored Gauri, resplendent as with white pollen from the filaments of full-blown lotuses, may my desire be accomplished by thy favor !

JIMUTAVAHANA (*after hearing it*). O friend, a capital song ! and first-rate music ! Distinctness is attained, even though she plays with her bare fingers ; good time is kept, clearly defined in due divisions of slow, medium, and quick ; the three pauses are rendered in proper order with the "gopuchchha" first ; the three modes of playing are fully shown in the slow and quick accompaniments.

GIRL (*affectionately*). O princess, you have been playing for a long time. How is it that your fingers are not tired ?

MALAYAVATI (*reproachfully*). Girl, how should my fingers be weary, when playing before the goddess ?

GIRL. O princess, in my opinion there is little use in playing before this cruel one, who, up to this time, shows no favor to you ; though you have been so long a time conciliating her with due observances, which come hard on a young girl.

VIDUSHAKA. It is only a girl after all. Why should we not look ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. What harm would there be in so doing ? Women may be looked at without sin. Yet, perhaps, if she saw us, through fear, which is easily excited in one at her time of life, and of her character, she would not remain here long. So we will simply look through this network of tamala branches.

VIDUSHAKA. We will do so. (*Both of them peep through.*)

VIDUSHAKA (*after looking, with astonishment*). O friend, see, see ! how wonderful ! Not only by her knowledge of the lute does she cause delight, but her beauty, corresponding to her skill, charms the eye. Who can she be ? Is she a goddess or a woman of the Nagas ? A princess of the Vidyadharas, or born of the family of Siddhas ?

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking longingly*). Friend, who it is, I know not ; but this I do know, if she be a goddess, the thousand eyes of Hari have all they can wish. If she be a woman of the Nagas, then, whilst her face is there, the lowest hell is not without its moon. If she be of the Vidyadharas, then our race surpasses all others. If she be born of a family of

Siddhas, then in the three worlds are the Siddhas glorious. VIDUSHAKA (*after looking at the hero, joyfully, aside*). Good luck ! Though after a long delay, he is at last fallen into the power of love, or rather—(*looking at himself, and gesticulating*)—not so ; but into the power of me single-handed, the Brahman.

GIRL (*affectionately*). O princess, do I not say, "Where is the use of playing before this cruel one ?" (*She throws down the lute.*)

MALAYAVATI (*angrily*). Girl ! do not offend the revered Gauri. Has not a favor been done me by her this very day ?

GIRL (*with joy*). O princess, what can it be ?

MALAYAVATI. Girl, I know it well. Today in a dream, as I was playing this every lute, I was thus addressed by the revered Gauri—"Child Malayavati, I am well pleased with your perfect knowledge of the lute, and with your excessive devotion towards me, which is hard for a young girl : therefore before long a sovereign of the Vidyadharas shall be your husband."

GIRL (*with delight*). If it is so, why do you call it a dream ? Has not the goddess given you the very desire of your heart ?

VIDUSHAKA (*having heard*). Friend, surely this is a good opportunity to show ourselves to the princess. Come, then, we will go up.

JIMUTAVAHANA. I will not yet enter.

VIDUSHAKA (*going up and forcibly dragging the hero, who resists*). Welcome to your highness ! Chaturika speaks the truth. Here is the husband promised by the goddess.

MALAYAVATI (*standing up bashfully, pointing to the hero*). Girl, who is this ?

GIRL (*after looking at the hero, aside*). From this form of his, which surpasses all others, I conjecture that he is the man given through the favor of the goddess. (*The heroine looks at the hero wistfully, and with modesty.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. This form of thine, oh tremulous-eyed one, whose full breasts are agitated by thy breathing, is sufficiently fatigued by devotions. Why, then, oh timid one, is it further distressed by my presence ?

MALAYAVATI (*aside*). Through excessive alarm I cannot stand facing him. (*Looking at the hero sideways, and with a blush, she stands somewhat turned away.*)

GIRL. Princess, what does all this mean ?

MALAYAVATI. I cannot remain in his neighborhood, so come away. We will go elsewhere. (*She wishes to rise.*)

VIDUSHAKA. Ah ! she is scared. Shall I keep her just for a moment, as I do any learning that I may read ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. What would be the harm of it ?

VIDUSHAKA. O lady ! why this behavior of yours in such a grove as this, that a guest just arrived is not favored by you with a single word ?

GIRL (*looking at the heroine, to herself*). Her eyes seem pleased.

I will speak to her. (*Aloud.*) O princess, the Brahman speaks fittingly. Good behavior towards guests is becoming in you.

Why, then, do you stand as if distraught in your behavior towards so distinguished a one ; or rather, remain so if you will,—I will do what is seemly. (*Addressing the hero.*)

Welcome to your highness ! By occupying this seat, let your highness add beauty to the spot.

VIDUSHAKA. Friend, she says well. Let us sit down here and rest for a moment.

JIMUTAVAHANA. You are right. (*Both sit down.*)

MALAYAVATI (*addressing the servant girl*). O laughter-loving one, act not thus. Perhaps some ascetic is looking, and he will set me down as a giddy one. (*Then enters an Ascetic.*)

ASCETIC. I am thus bidden by Kausika, the head of the family :

“My child, Sandilya, the young king of the Siddhas, Mitravasu, is gone today, at his father’s request, to seek the Prince Jimutavahana, the future monarch of the Vidyadharas, who is somewhere here on the Malaya Mount, as a husband for his sister Malayavati, and perhaps the limit of the time for the mid-day oblation will pass by while Malayavati awaits his return. Go, therefore, and fetch her with you.”

I am going, therefore, to the temple of Gauri in the sacred grove. (*Walking about, looking down on the ground, with surprise.*) Ah ! Whose footsteps have we here on the dusty ground, having the sign of the chakra manifest ? (*Looking forward and seeing Jimutavahana.*) Assuredly it will be the footstep of this mighty man. For there is the turban-like mass of hair visible on the scalp ; there shines a woolly tuft between the eyebrows ; his eyes resemble a lotus ;

his chest vies with Hari ; and since his feet are marked with the *chakra*, I conjecture that he who rests here is assuredly one who has attained the dignity of an emperor of the *Vidyadharas*. However, away with doubt. It must surely be *Jimutavahana* himself. (*Seeing Malayavati.*) Ah! here is the princess too. (*Looking at them both.*) Destiny would at length be acting in a straightforward manner did she unite this pair, mutually suited to one another. (*Going up and addressing the hero.*) Welcome to your highness !

**JIMUTAVAHANA.** *Jimutavahana salutes your honor. (Wishes to rise.)*

**ASCETIC.** Do not rise ; your highness should be respected by us, for "A guest is everyone's master." Remain, then, at your ease.

**MALAYAVATI.** Sir, I bow to you.

**ASCETIC** (*turning to her*). My child, mayst thou marry a suitable husband ! O princess, *Kausika*, the head of the family, sends word to thee, "The time of mid-day oblation passes by, come therefore quickly."

**MALAYAVATI.** As the spiritual parent orders. (*To herself.*) On the one side the orders of the spiritual parent, on the other the pleasure of the sight of the dear one. Thus my heart swings me to and fro, perched on the see-saw of going and not going. (*Rising with a sigh, and looking at the hero with mode " and affection, she goes out with the Ascetic.*)

**JIMUTAVAHANA** (*with a sigh, looking longingly after the heroine.*) By her whose departure is slow, by reason of the rounded beauty of her form, an impress is stamped upon my heart, even though she leaves me.

**VIDUSHAKA.** Well, you have seen all there was to be seen ! The fire of my appetite rages, its fury doubled, so to speak, by the heat of the rays of the mid-day sun. Come, then, let us go forth, that I, the *Brahman*, having become some one's guest, may support my life with bulbs, roots, and fruit, obtained from the *Munis*.

**JIMUTAVAHANA** (*looking upwards*). The adorable thousand-rayed one has reached the zenith ; for see, the lord of elephants with pallid cheeks, their sandal-juice instantaneously dried off by the excessive heat, as he fans his face with the

breezes of his broad ears, his chest all wet with the drops falling from his trunk, endures a state of existence hard to be borne even by the fainting bignonia. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

## ACT SECOND.

(*A Servant Girl Enters*)

GIRL. I am bidden by the Princess Malayavati, "Manoharika, my respected brother, Mitravasu, tarries long today; go then, and inquire whether he has come or not." (*She walks about*). Who can this be coming hither in such haste? (*Looking*). Why! It is Chaturika. (*Then enters a second Servant girl*).

FIRST GIRL (*going up to her*). Holla, Chaturika! why, avoiding me, do you go thus hastily?

SECOND GIRL. O Manoharika, I am bidden by the Princess Malayavati, "Chaturika, my body cannot endure the fatigue of gathering flowers. My passion exceedingly torments me, as though produced by autumnal sunshine. Go, then, prepare the seat of moonstone in the arbor of sandal-creepers, shadowed with leaves of young plantain trees." I have done as ordered, and am going to inform the princess.

FIRST GIRL. Go, then, quickly and tell her, so that having gone thither her fever may be alleviated.

SECOND GIRL (*laughing to herself*). Her fever is not of a nature to be thus relieved. In my opinion her fever will be augmented on seeing the bower of sandal-creepers with its various delights. (*Aloud*) Go on, then, you. I too will go and inform the princess that the moonstone seat is prepared. (*Exeunt.—Then enters with a longing look Malayavati and a Servant Girl*).

MALAYAVATI (*with a sigh to herself*). O heart! after having made my mouth dumb through shyness towards him, thou art now gone to him of thine own accord. Alas! for thy selfishness! (*Aloud*). O Chaturika! point out to me the temple of Gauri.

GIRL (*to herself*). Though on the way to the bower of sandal-

creepers, she says, "To the temple of Gauri!" (*Aloud*). The princess is on the way to the bower of young sandal-trees. MALAYAVATI (*with confusion*). It is well that you remind me. Come then, we will go thither.

GIRL. Let the princess come. (*Malayavati goes to a different part of the stage. The Girl looks back with uneasiness, to herself*). Alas, for her absence of mind ! Why, she is actually gone towards the temple of the goddess ! (*Aloud*). O lady ! is not the sandal-creeper bower in this direction ? Come this way, then. (*The heroine does so with a blank smile*). Here we are at the sandal-creeper bower, therefore let your ladyship enter and sit down on the moonstone seat to recover yourself. (*Both sit down*).

MALAYAVATI (*with a sigh to herself*). Lord of the flower-tipped arrows, against that man who surpasses you in beauty of form you do nothing at all; but against me, though blameless, you are not ashamed to strike, saying to yourself, "She is a weak woman." (*Looking at herself, and gesticulating as one in love. Aloud.*) Girl, how is it that even this sandal-creeper bower, from which the sun's rays are kept by the density of the shoots, does not alleviate the pain of my fever ?

GIRL. I know the cause of this fever, but the princess is unwilling to avow it.

MALAYAVATI (*to herself*). She sees through me. Still I will ask. (*Aloud*). Girl, what is that which I will not avow ? Come, tell me this cause of yours.

GIRL. It is the man placed in your heart.

MALAYAVATI (*with joy and agitation, after rising and advancing two or three steps*). Where—where is he ?

GIRL (*Rising, with a smile*). O lady, what he ? (*Heroine sitting down ashamed, keeps her face bent down.*) Well, I will explain. This man who is established in your affections was promised to you by the goddess in a dream, and a moment after he was seen by you, resembling Cupid without his flowery arrows. This man, then, is the cause of your anguish, so that even this bower of young sandal-trees, though cool in its very nature, does not relieve the pain of your fever.

MALAYAVATI (*to herself*). I am found out by Chaturika. (*Aloud*) Girl, well are you named Chaturika, the clever one. Why should I longer conceal it from you ? I will tell you all.

GIRL. O lady, it is as good as told already. Where is the use of more talk? You have had enough agitation. Do not further excite yourself. As sure as my name is Chaturika, he too will not enjoy a moment of happiness until he has again seen you. I have found out this too.

MALAYAVATI (*with tears*). How shall I obtain so great bliss?

GIRL. Say not so. How can he be happy when even Vishnu has no happiness without Lakshmi on his bosom?

MALAYAVATI. Can a friend say anything but what is kind? But it makes my passion distress me more, when I think how I did not honor the noble hero with a single word, so that he will say to himself, "That awkward girl is wanting in respectful behaviour." (*She weeps*).

GIRL. O lady, do not give way! (*To herself*). Yet how should she not weep, since the great passion of her heart distresses her more and more? What then shall I now do? I will place on her breast the juice of a sandal-creeper spray. (*Rising and plucking a sprig of sandal, and squeezing out the juice, she places it on her breast. Aloud*). O lady, do I not say, "Weep not?" Even this sandal-juice, notwithstanding its nature, does not relieve thy breast, since it is rendered warm by these tear-drops falling unchecked. (*Takes a plantain leaf and fans her.*)

MALAYAVATI (*checks her with a hand*). Do not fan me. Even the wind of the plantain leaf is warm.

GIRL. Do not impute the fault to it. It is you who make warm this wind of the plantain leaf, which is cool through its contact with the gathered sandal shoots, changing its nature with your sighs.

MALAYAVATI (*with tears*). Is there any means of checking this fever?

GIRL. There is indeed. If he would but now come. (*Then enters the hero with the Vidushaka.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. O Cupid, why are these purposeless arrows flung against me, already so deeply wounded? Since I was looked on by her, regardless of the Muni's presence, when, as she turned, though but for a moment, she caused, by the glance of her bright black eye, the trees of the hermitage to appear flecked, as though they had masses of the skins of the dappled antelope gleaming suspended from their boughs.

VIDUSHAKA. O friend, where now is all thy firmness gone ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. Am I not firm beyond measure ? What ! have I not passed through the nights, though radiant with the moon ? Do I not drink in the scent of the blue lotus ? and endure the jasmine-scented evening winds ? Hear I not the humming of the bees upon the lotus pond ? That you should thus openly taunt me, saying, "He is wanting in firmness in difficulties." (*After considering.*) Or rather, it was not so wrongly said, my friend Atreya, for am I not really wanting in firmness, since I cannot bear even flowery arrows, shot by a bodiless archer, woman-hearted that I am ! How then can I say to you, "I am firm ?"

VIDUSHAKA (*to himself*). Since he confesses his want of firmness, he reveals how excessively troubled his heart must be. How shall I divert it ? (*Aloud*). O friend, how is it that, neglecting your parents, you have again come hither already ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. It is a suitable question. To whom shall I tell it, if not to you ? This very day I had a dream. I saw yon loved one—(*pointing with a finger*)—seated on a moonstone seat in this sandal-creeper bower, in tears, as if reproaching me in some love quarrel. I wish, therefore, to spend the remainder of the day in this sandal-creeper bower, made pleasant by the late presence of the loved one, as seen in my dream. Come, then, we will go. (*They walk about*).

GIRL (*after listening, in trepidation*). O lady, there is a noise like footsteps.

MALAYAVATI (*looking at herself, with agitation*). Do not let anyone, by seeing the state that I am in, suspect the secret of my heart. Rise then. We will conceal ourselves in this red asoka tree, and just see who it is. (*They do so*).

VIDUSHAKA. Here is the sandal-creeper bower. So come along. We will enter. (*They enter*).

JIMUTAVAHANA. Even this sandal-creeper bower with its moonstone seat delights me not, abandoned as it is by the moon-faced one, like the face of night without its moonlight.

GIRL (*having peeped*). Lady, I give you joy. Is not this the very person on whom your heart is set ?

MALAYAVATI (*with joy and agitation, after looking*). O girl, now that I have seen him, through my extreme agitation I cannot remain here so near him. Suppose he should see us !



Come, we will go elsewhere. (*After going one step, longingly.*)  
How my feet tremble !

GIRL ~~with~~ *with a smile*). O timid one ! who can see you as you stand here ? Do you forget the red asoka tree ? Let us then sit down, and remain here. (*They do so*).

VIDUSHAKA (*looking about*). Here, my friend, is that very moonstone seat. (*Hero sighs with tears*).

GIRL. O lady, I think their talk is about a dream. Let us listen then attentively. (*They both listen*).

VIDUSHAKA (*touching him with his hand*). My friend, do I not say, "Here is that moonstone seat ?"

JIMUTAVAHANA (*sighing, with a tear*). It is well guessed. (*Pointing to it with his hand*.) This is that very moonstone seat on which I saw the loved one; her pale face reclined upon her left shoot-like hand, and her breast heaving with deep sobs. When I delayed to soothe her, her fit of anger passed away; and her slightly-quivering lip and burst of tears betrayed the real state of her feelings. We will sit therefore on this moonstone seat. (*They both sit down*).

MALAYAVATI (*after considering*). Who now can she be whom he thus talks about ?

GIRL. Just as we unobserved are looking at him, so I hope you too have not been seen by him.

MALAYAVATI. It is possible. But then again, he is talking fondly about some one with whom he had a love quarrel.

GIRL. Lady, do not have such a suspicion, but let us listen further.

VIDUSHAKA (*to himself*). This sort of talk pleases him, so I will continue it. (*Aloud*). Friend, how then was this weeping one addressed by you ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. She was thus addressed : "This moonstone seat, moistened with the water of tears, seems as if oozing with dew from the rising of thy moonface."

MALAYAVATI (*angrily*). O Chaturika ! what more than this need we hear ? Come, then, we will go.

GIRL (*taking her by the hand*). Lady, say not so. It is you alone whom he saw in his dream. His glance, resting on another, would find no pleasure.

MALAYAVATI. My heart is not convinced. So we will just wait until the end of this conversation.

JIMUTAVAHANA. I know what I will do. I will draw her on this stone seat, and amuse myself by looking on her picture. Go, then, and fetch me some pieces of red arsenic from the mountain side.

VIDUSHAKA. Whatever your highness orders. (*Walking about, he picks up something, and returns to him.*) You asked for one colour; but I have brought you some pieces from which you may easily get the five colours. Let your highness draw. (*Gives him something.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. Well done, my friend. (*He takes it and draws upon the stone, with rapture.*) See, my friend, even the sight of this first outline of the beloved face gladdens me, as a digit of the new moon,—that face which is a very feast to the eyes, beautiful as its full unimpaired disc. (*He continues drawing.*)

VIDUSHAKA (*looking on with curiosity*). Though she is not in sight, her very form is depicted. Well, it is marvellous.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with a smile*). O friend! the beloved is in my presence, brought before me by my wishes. If, as I continually see her, I draw her, where is the marvel?

MALAYAVATI (*with tears*). O Chaturika! I know well the end of this discourse. Come, then, we will go and look for Mitravasu.

GIRL (*with despair, to herself*). Her impatience is regardless even of her very life. (*Aloud*) O lady! has not Manoharika gone to him? Perhaps, then, your brother Mitravasu is on his way here.

(*Then enters Mitravasu.*)

MITRAVASU. I am thus bidden by my father, "My child Mitravasu, this Jimutavahana, by living so near us, has been well observed; therefore he is a suitable son-in-law. Let, then, our child Malayavati be given to him." As for myself, through my dependence on her affection, I suffer a variable state of feeling; for, on the one hand, this young man is the ornament of the race of Vidyadhara kings, is clever, approved by the good, unrivalled in beauty, endowed with valor, is wise and modest; but, on the other hand, he would readily give up his life, through pity, on behalf of any living creature. Thus, when yielding up my peerless sister to such an one, I feel both satisfaction and sorrow. I have

heard that Jimutavahana is in the sandal-creeper bower, adjoining the grove of Gauri. This is that bower, so I will enter. (*Enters*).

VIDUSHAKA (*seeing him, with excitement*). O friend ! cover with this plantain leaf that girl you have just drawn in the picture. Here, surely, is Mitravasu, the young prince of the Siddhas, just arrived. Perhaps he will see it. (*The hero covers it with the plantain leaf*).

MITRAVASU (*entering*). Prince, Mitravasu bows to you.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking at him*). Welcome to Mitravasu. Take a seat here.

GIRL. O lady ! your brother, Mitravasu, has arrived.

MALAYAVATI. I am well pleased to hear it.

JIMUTAVAHANA. O Mitravasu ! is Visvvasu, the king of the Siddhas, well ?

MITRAVASU. He is well. By the command of my father I am come into your presence.

JIMUTAVAHANA. What says his Highness ?

MALAYAVATI. I will just hear what salutation has been sent by my father.

MITRAVASU (*with tears*). My father says, "I have a daughter, by name Malayavati, who is, so to speak, the very life of all this race of Siddha-rajās. She is presented by me to thee. Let her be accepted."

GIRL (*smiling*). O lady ! why are you not angry now ?

MALAYAVATI (*with a blush and smiling, standing with face bent down*). Do not laugh, girl. Have you forgotten that his heart is set on another ?

JIMUTAVAHANA (*aside*). My friend, we are fallen into a difficulty.

VIDUSHAKA (*aside*). Ah ! I perceive. With the exception of her, your mind is not satisfied with any other. Let him, then, be dismissed with some civil speech or other.

MALAYAVATI (*angrily, to herself*). Cruel one, who does not know what this means ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. Who in the world would not desire so honourable an alliance as that with your Highness ? But a mind set in one direction cannot readily be turned in another. So that I cannot accept her.

(*Heroine faints*).

GIRL. Revive, my lady.

VIDUSHAKA (*to Mitravasú*). Since he is altogether dependent on others, what is the use of questioning him? Go, then, to his parents and ask them.

MITRAVASU (*to himself*). It is well said, He will not disobey his parents. His father dwells in the precinct of Gauri. So I will go there, and cause Malayavati to be accepted for him by his father. (*The heroine comes to herself.*) Assuredly the prince knows best, who has refused us after we have opened our hearts.

MALAYAVATI (*laughing angrily*). How! Mitravasú still talks with him, though humbled by rejection! (*Exit Mitravasú*).

MALAYAVATI (*to herself, looking at herself with tears*). What is the use of still supporting this body of mine, defiled by ill-fortune, filled with excessive woe. I will hang myself to that Asoka tree with this Atimukta creeper. and so put an end to my life. So it shall be. (*Aloud, with a blank smile*). Girl, just see whether Mitravasú has gone or not, so that I, too, may depart.

GIRL (*having gone a few steps, and looking back; to herself*). I see that she has some intention different to her words; so I will not go, but, concealed here, will see what she intends to do.

MALAYAVATI (*looking all round, and taking the noose, with tears*). O revered Gauri! since your promise has not been fulfilled in this world, you will contrive that I be not equally full of sorrow in another state of existence. (*So speaking, she places the noose on her neck*).

GIRL (*running up with agitation*). Help, your highness, help! Here is the princess trying to destroy herself by hanging.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*rushing up with excitement*). Where? Where is she?

GIRL. Here, in this Asoka tree.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking joyfully*). This is the very object of of my passion. (*He takes the heroine by the hand, and casts aside the noose.*) Assuredly no such attempt should be made. O lovely one! remove from the creeper this hand, which vies with it in beauty. How could that hand, which I do not consider strong enough to gather flowers, grasp a noose to hang yourself with?

MALAYAVATI (*with agitation*). Girl, who is this? (*Looking at*

*him angrily, she wishes to cast off his hand.*) Loose me, let go my hand. Who are you to stop me? What! must you be sued even in death?

JIMUTAVAHANA. How should I release your guilty hand, which was caught in the very act of placing a noose on a neck fit only for strings of pearl?

VIDUSHAKA. What could have been the cause of this determination of hers to die?

GIRL. Was it not this friend of yours?

JIMUTAVAHANA. How! I the cause of her death? I do not understand.

VIDUSHAKA. O lady! how do you mean?

GIRL (*meaningly*) It was that loved one, whoever she is, that was painted by your friend on the stone. My mistress took this determination in a fit of despair, saying to herself, "Through his devotion to that woman, I am not accepted, even when offered to him by Mitravasu."

JIMUTAVAHANA (*joyfully, to himself*) How, then! This is that Malayavati, daughter of Visvavasu! Yet, except from the ocean, how could there be the birth of a digit of the moon? Ah! How I have been taken in by her!

VIDUSHAKA. O lady! if this be so, my friend here is blameless. If you do not believe me, however, go yourself and look on the surface of the stone. (*The heroine, with joy and modesty, looking at the hero, draws away her hand*).

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with a smile*). I will not release it, until you have seen the object of my passion, drawn on the stone (*All walk about*).

VIDUSHAKA (*having taken off the plantain leaf*). O lady! look. Behold the individual his heart is set on.

MALAYAVATI (*having looked at it, aside, smiling*). O Chaturika! it is as if my very self were drawn there.

GIRL (*looking at the picture and at the heroine*). O lady! why do you say "as if myself were drawn there"? So exact is the likeness, that I do not know whether it is a reflection of you cast on the stone, or a drawing.

MALAYAVATI (*with a smile*). Girl, I am put to shame by him, showing me drawn in a picture.

VIDUSHAKA. Your Gandharva marriage is now complete, so you may release her hand. Here comes someone in great

haste. (*The hero releases her. Then enters a Servant Girl.*)

SERVANT GIRL (*joyfully*). O lady ! good luck to you. You are accepted by the parents of Jimutavahana.

VIDUSHAKA (*dancing about*). He ! he ! The desires of my friend are fulfilled, or rather, I should say, of her highness Malaya-vati; or still better, not so much of either of these, as (*gesticulating eating*) of me, the Brahman.

SERVANT GIRL (*addressing Malaya-vati*). I am bidden by the young king, Mitravasu, "This is the marriage day of Malaya-vati; go therefore quickly, and fetch her." Come, then, let us go.

VIDUSHAKA. O daughter of a slave, how can my friend remain here when you have taken her away ?

SERVANT GIRL. Desist, base one. Hasten, hasten ! It is full time for your bath. (*The heroine, looking affectionately and with modesty at the hero, goes out with her attendants.*)

HERALD (*reciting behind the scenes*). Lending to Mount Malaya a splendor like that of Meru, by reason of the showers of scented powder,—and all at once having the beauty of the mild sunshine of early dawn, through the red-lead dust,—the Siddha-world announces, by songs of the nymphs, rendered delightful by the sounding of their jingling anklets of red gems, that the time for your marriage bathing has arrived, which brings completion of your wishes.

VIDUSHAKA (*after hearing this*). O friend ! the time for bathing has come opportunely.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*joyfully*). If so why do we stop here ? Come on. We will salute my father, and go to the bath. (*Exeunt omnes*)

## ACT THREE

(*There enters intoxicated, his garments tumbled and stained, with a cup in his hand, a Parasite, and a Slave, carrying a vessel of wine on his shoulder.*)

PARASITE. These are the only two gods for me—the one who is always drinking, and the one who brings lovers together—

Baladeva and Kama-deva. (*Reels about*) Assuredly the life of me, Sekharaka, is very prosperous, since in my bosom is a loved lady, in my mouth lotus-scented wine, and on my head a garland, like a perpetual minister to my wants. (*Stumbles.*) Halloa ! Who is pushing against me now ? (*With joy*). Assuredly Navamalika makes game of me.

SLAVE. She is not yet come, sir.

PARASITE (*angrily*). The marriage of Malayavati took place in the first watch; how, then, is she not come yet, though it is morning ? (*Thinking for a time, with joy*). I suppose that at the marriage feast all the Siddha and Vidyadhara people, with their friends and acquaintances, are enjoying the delight of drinking in the flower-garden; so that there Navamalika will be looking out for me. So I will now go there. What is Sekharaka without Navamalika ? (*He begins to go out, staggering.*)

SLAVE. Come along, sir. Here is the flower-garden. Be • pleased to enter.

(*Then enters the Vidushaka, with a pair of garments on his shoulder.*)

VIDUSHAKA. The desires of my dear friend are fulfilled. I am told that he is on his way to the flower-garden. So I will now go there. (*Walking and looking about*). Here is the flower-garden. I will enter. (*After entering, gesticulating as if annoyed by bees.*) Halloa ! Why now do these odious bees attack me ? (*Smelling himself*). Ah ! I see how it is. I have been respectfully decked with perfumes by the relations of Malayavati, as the bridegroom's friend, and a garland of Santana flowers has been placed upon my head, and now that very respect has become a cause of annoyance. What shall I do ? Having dressed myself as a woman with these pieces of red cloth, which I have brought from Malayavati, I will go on, using the upper garment as a veil. We will see what these villainous bees will do then. (*He does so.*)

PARASITE (*observing him, joyfully*). Halloa ! slave. (*Pointing laughingly with his finger.*) Here is surely Navamalika. She has seen me, and, in a rage at my long delay, puts on her veil and turns away. So I will appease her with caresses. (*Going up, with a laugh, and embracing the Vidushaka, he tries to put some betel nut in his mouth.*)

VIDUSHAKA (*perceiving the smell of wine, holds his nose, and turns away his face*). How now? Having but just escaped the attack of bees of one sort, I am assailed by an odious bee of a different nature.

PARASITE. Why do you turn away your face in anger? (*Prostrating himself, and placing the Vidushaka's foot on his head.*) Be appeased, O Navamalika! (*Then enters a Servant Girl.*)

GIRL. I am bidden by the queen—"O Navamalika, go to the flower-garden, and say to the keeper, Pallavika, 'Today prepare the tamala-bower with especial care, for the bridegroom and Malayavati are going thither.'" I have given the message to Pallavika; and I will now seek my dear friend, • Sekharaka, whose passion will be increased by my night's absence. (*Seeing him.*) Here he is. (*Angrily.*) What now! He is courting some other woman! I will just stop, and find out who she is.

PARASITE (*joyfully*). He who, through excessive pride, bows not to Siva, Vishnu, or Brahma, that same Sekharaka falls at thy feet, O Navamalika.

VIDUSHAKA. Oh drunken wretch, there is no Navamalika here.

GIRL (*looking, with a smile*).• Sekharaka, overcome with wine, is soothing his reverence Atreya in mistake for me. I will put on a pretence of anger, and have a game with them.

SLAVE (*having seen the Servant Girl, shaking Sekharaka with his hand*). Sir, let her go. It is not Navamalika. Here is Navamalika, just come, and looking on, with eyes lit up with anger.

GIRL (*going up*). Well, Sekharaka, whom are you courting here?

VIDUSHAKA (*letting the veil drop*). O lady, it is only I, an ill-fated Brahman.

PARASITE (*recognising the Vidushaka*). Halloa! You tawny monkey, would you too deceive Sekharaka? Come, slave, take hold of him, whilst I soothe Navamalika.

SLAVE. Whatever my master orders.

PARASITE (*letting go the Vidushaka and falling at the feet of the Servant Girl*). Be appeased, appeased, O Navamalika!

VIDUSHAKA (*to himself*). This seems a good opportunity to make off. (*Tries to get away.*)



SLAVE (*grasping the Vidushaka by his Brahmanical cord, which is broken in the struggle*). Where are you off to, you tawny monkey. (*Binding him round the neck by the upper garment, he drags him along.*)

VIDUSHAKA. O lady, Navamalika, be appeased. Make him release me.

GIRL. If you fall at my feet, with your head on the ground. (*She laughs.*)

VIDUSHAKA (*with anger, and trembling*). Ah ! How can I, who am a Brahman, and friend of the king of the Gandharvas, fall at the feet of the daughter of a slave ?

GIRL (*shaking her finger at him, and smiling*). I will compel you to bow presently.—Get up, Sekharaka, get up. I am satisfied. (*She embraces him.*) But here the dear friend of the bridegroom has been insulted by you, and I dare say your master, Mitravasu, will be angry on hearing of it. So you had better pay respect to him.

PARASITE. Whatsoever Navamalika orders. (*After embracing the Vidushaka.*) O sir, you were joked with by me, thinking you were one of my relations. (*Reeling about.*) Am I really Sekharaka ? Has any joke really been made ? (*Making his upper garment into a bundle, he offers it as a seat.*) Let my relation take a seat here

VIDUSHAKA. (*to himself*). Thank goodness ! he has passed the violent stage of his drunkenness. (*He sits down*)

PARASITE. O Navamalika, do you take a seat at his side, so that I may pay my respects to you both at once. (*Servant Girl, with a laugh, sits down. The Parasite takes up the drinking-cup.*) Slave, fill this to the brim with wine. (*Slave gesticulates the filling of the cup. The Parasite takes some flowers from the garland on his head, puts them into the cup, and kneeling on both knees, presents it to Navamalika.*) O Navamalika, taste it, and pass it to him.

GIRL. (*with a smile*). Whatever you wish. (*Tastes, and gives it back.*)

PARASITE. (*presenting the cup to the Vidushaka*). This cup, with its contents specially flavored by contact with the lips of Navamalika, has never before been tasted, except by Sekharaka. Drink, therefore. What greater honor could I show you ?

VIDUSHAKA. (*with a very forced smile*). O Sekharaka, I am a Brahman.

PARASITE. If so, where is your ninefold thread ?

VIDUSHAKA. It was dragged and broken by that slave.

GIRL. (*laughingly*). Recite to us, then, some verses of the Vedas.

VIDUSHAKA. O lady, what have the smell of wine and the verses of the Vedas in common ? However, I have no wish to argue with you. The Brahman falls at your feet. (*Offers to fall at her feet.*)

GIRL (*checking him with both hands*). Your reverence must not do so. O Sekharaka, get away, get away ; he is really a Brahman. (*She falls at the feet of the Vidushaka.*) O sir, do not nurse your wrath. This was only a piece of friendly joking

PARASITE (*to himself*). I too had better appease him (*Falling at his feet, aloud*) Let your reverence forgive me for having offended under the influence of wine. I will now go with Navamalika to the drinking-booth.

VIDUSHAKA. I forgive you. Be off, both of you. I too will go and see my dear patron. (*Excunt Parasite, with Slave and Servant Girl.*)

VIDUSHAKA. The untimely death of a Brahman has been averted. But since I am defiled by contact with this drunken youth, I will just ! the in this tank. (*He does so. Looking towards the tiring-room.*) Here comes my dear friend, supporting Malayavati, like Krishna supporting Rukmini. I will go and attend upon them. (*Then enters the hero, dressed in marriage garments, with Malayavati, and a suitable retinue.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking, with rapture, at Malayavati*). When looked upon, she casts down her eye ; when addressed, she makes no reply ; on the couch, she remains turned away ; when excessively embraced, she trembles ; when her friends leave the room, she too wishes to go out ; through the very perversity of her behavior my newly-married love is still more to my liking. (*Looking at Malayavati.*) O beloved Malayavati, a vow of silence was kept by me, though accustomed to answer in haughty tones ; this body of mine was bathed in the rays of the sun and moon, and in the flames of

forest fires ; and I was rapt in total abstraction of mind for many days and nights. Surely the fruit of all that penance is, that I now behold this face of thine.

MALAYAVATI (*aside*). O Chaturika, he is not only pleasant to the eye, but he knows also how to speak in a flattering manner.

GIRL (*smiling*). You might say so, if he was flattering. But where is there flattery in this ?

JAMUTAVAHANA. O Chaturika, point out the path to the flower-garden.

GIRL. This way, my lord.

JIMUTAVAHANA. (*walking about, addressing the heroine*). Let your ladyship come just as you are. The weight of your breasts themselves tends to weary you ; why, then, place a pearl ornament on your waist ? The weight of your hips is wearisome—much more this girdle ! There is hardly sufficient power in your feet to carry your limbs, far less your anklets ! 'Your limbs being so lovely, why should you wear ornaments that only tend to weary you ?

GIRL. Here is the flower-garden. Be pleased to enter. (*All enter.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking round*). Well, truly the beauty of the flower-garden is great ! Here the droppings from the sandal-trees cool the creeper-bower with its tessellated pavement. The peacock dances yet more wildly to the shrill sound of the shower-baths. The cascade, brown with the pollen of flowers, shaken from the trees by the impetuous foam, falls with a rush from the machine, and fills the basins at the foot of the trees. Again, these bees, making the creeper-bower resound with their attempts at song, as they drink in abundant honey, in company with their wives, covered with a perfumed dust by the pollen of flowers, seem to enjoy on every side a drinking festival. (*Vidushaka comes up.*)

VIDUSHAKA. Victory to your highness ! Welcome to your ladyship !

JIMUTAVAHANA. O friend ! you have been very long in coming.

VIDUSHAKA. I am come as soon as I could. But I delayed so long walking about, through curiosity to see the drinking of the Vidyadharas and Siddhas, intermingled at the marriage feast. Do you, too, just take a look at them.

JIMUTAVAHANA. We will do as you say. (*Looking on all sides.*)

Friend, see, see! Their limbs annointed with red sandal, and wearing wreaths of Santana flowers, with their bright garments variegated by the mixture of rays from their bright jewelled ornaments, these Vidyadharas and Siddhas, intermingled beneath the shade of the sandal-trees, drink the nectar, just tasted and left by their loved ones. Come, we will go to the tamala avenue. (*Walks about.*)

VIDUSHAKA. Here is the tamala avenue. Her ladyship appears fatigued with walking to it. Let us therefore sit down on this crystal seat, and rest.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Friend, it is well suggested. The face of my dear one, after having worsted the moon by the pale beauty of its cheeks, now surely wishes to surpass the lotus when reddened by the sun's rays. (*Taking the heroine by the hand.*) Dear one, let us sit down.

MALAYAVATI. Whatever my husband bids me. (*All sit down.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*raising the heroine's face, and looking at it*).

Dear one, to no purpose hast thou been wearied by us, through our anxiety to see the flower-garden, since this face of thine, resplendent with its creepers of eyebrows and shoot-like pink lips, is a very garden of paradise. Compared with this, every garden is but a jungle.

GIRL (*addressing the Vidushaka, with a smile*). You have heard how he describes the princess. Now I will paint you.

VIDUSHAKA (*gladly*). O, lady! I am alive again now. Pray, then, do me the favor in your best style, that yon fellow may never again call me a tawny monkey.

GIRL. Sir, you seemed lovely to me at the marriage watch, with your eyes shut through drowsiness. Therefore stand like that for me to paint you. (*Vidushaka does so.*)

GIRL (*to herself*). Whilst he stands with his eyes shut, I will blacken his face with the juice of a tamala shoot, which will do as well as indigo. (*Rising and squeezing a tamala shoot, she blackens his face. The hero and heroine look at the Vidushaka.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. Friend, you are in luck, being painted, with us for spectators. (*Heroine laughs on seeing Vidushaka's face. Jimutavahana looks in her face.*) O lovely-eyed one! the springing of the blossom of a smile is seen on your shoot-

like lower lip, but the fruit is seen elsewhere, namely in the eyes of me as I gaze.

VIDUSHAKA. Madam, what have you done ?

GIRL. Why, are you not painted ?

VIDUSHAKA (*after rubbing his hand over his face and looking at it, raising his staff*). O daughter of a slave ! the royal family are present. What shall I do to you ? —Alas ! notwithstanding your royal presence, I am blackened by this daughter of a slave. How can I remain here ? I will be off.  
(*Exit.*)

GIRL. His reverence Atreya is vexed with me. I will go and conciliate him.

MALAYAVATI. O Chaturika ! whither do you go, leaving me all alone ?

GIRL (*pointing to the hero, and smiling*). May you be long in such solitude ! (*Exit.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking in the face of the heroine*). O lovely "one ! if this face of thine, with its pink flush as it is lighted up by the sun's rays, and with its soft down revealed by the spreading gleam of its teeth, is really a lotus, why is not a bee seen drinking the honey from it ? (*The heroine, laughing, turns her face another way. The hero repeats the same sentence, in a polite way asking for a kiss.*)

GIRL (*entering with a hurried toss of the curtain, and coming up*). Here is the noble Mitravasus, desirous to see the prince on some business.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Dear one, do not go to the house. I too will soon come, after I have seen Mitravasus. (*Exit heroine with servant girl.*)

MITRAVASU (*entering*). Whilst that enemy is still unslain, how can I without a sense of shame say to Jimutavahana, "Your kingdom is seized by an enemy ?" Still, it is not right to go without informing him. So I will tell him and then go.  
O prince ! Mitravasus salutes you.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*on seeing Mitravasus*). Pray, be seated. (*Mitravasus takes a seat, keeping his eyes fixed on him.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA (*looking steadily at him*). O Mitravasus ! you seem vexed.

MITRAVASU. Who would be put out by one so despicable as Matanga ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. What has Matanga been doing ?

MITRAVASU. Assuredly to his own destruction, he has attacked your kingdom.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with joy, to himself*). Oh ! would that it were true !

MITRAVASU. Therefore let the prince deign to give orders for his destruction. What need of talking long about it ? As soon as, at thy command, the Siddhas are gone hence to battle, making the day dark by clouding the sun, as if it were the rainy season, with their heaven-traversing chariots crowding on every side,—your monarchy, whose zemindars are temporarily bowing through fear of this haughty enemy, will at once be regained. What need though of great multitudes ? By me, single-handed, shining with an aureole of rays from the quickly-drawn sword, behold the coward Matanga already slain on the battle-field, like a mighty elephant by a lion which has sprung on him from afar.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*to himself, covering his ears*). Ah ! how cruelly he speaks ! However, let it pass. (*Aloud.*) O Mitravasu ! What is all this ? Even something more than this might be possible for you, with such strong arms. But how should I, a man who through pity, though unasked, would give up his own body for the sake of another, permit the cruelty of destroying life for the sake of a kingdom ? For my part, I can conceive no crime except the Vices. If, then, you would please me, pity that poor wretch, who, for the sake of kingly power, has become a slave to the Vices.

MITRAVASU (*bitterly*). One, indeed, who has done so much good to us, and is in such misfortune, is well worthy of pity !

JIMUTAVAHANA (*to himself*). His wrath is not to be averted. His mind, swayed by passion, cannot be turned aside. Well, let it be. (*Aloud.*) Rise, we will go indoors. There I will advise you. The day is now ended,—for yonder sun, the sole object worthy of adulation, whose favor is solely for the good of others, is looked on by the Siddhas, with their voices loud in continual praise, as he goes to rest, having vivified the universe with his rays, whose sole business is to fill the eight quarters with light, and to keep off from the lotus buds the binding seal of sleep. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

## ACT FOUR

*(Enter a Chamberlain carrying two red garments, and a Doorkeeper.)*

CHAMBERLAIN. I, who issue commands for the seraglio, who watch for trippings at every step, now, weak through old age, make my resemblance to a king perfect by handling a staff of office.

DOORKEEPER. O reverend Vasubhadra ! where are you going ?

CHAMBERLAIN. I am bidden by the queen, the mother of Mitravasu : "O chamberlain ! for ten days you should take red garments to Malayavati and my son-in-law." Now the daughter is remaining in her father-in-law's household, and Jimutavahana is gone today with the young king to see the sea-shore, as I have heard. Shall I go, then, to the king's daughter or to the son-in law ?

DOORKEEPER. Sir, you had better go to the princess, for perhaps by this time the son-in-law will have come there of his own accord.

CHAMBERLAIN. You advise well. But where are you yourself now going ?

DOORKEEPER. I am commissioned by King Visvvasu to go and tell Mitravasu, "Since in this Festival of the Lanterns some present should be given to Malayavati and the bridegroom, therefore come and think of something suitable to the occasion." *(Exeunt both. Then enter Jimutavahana and Mitravasu.)*

JIMUTAVAHANA. A green glade for a couch, a white stone for a seat, a dwelling beneath the trees, the cool water of a cascade for drink, roots for food, the deer for companions, —in the forest which thus abounds in all that one could wish, unsought, there is this one fault, that, through the absence of suppliants, we live there to no purpose, having no opportunity of assisting others.

MITRAVASU *(looking upwards)*. Prince, hasten, hasten ! It is time for the flow of the tide.

JIMUTAVAHANA *(listening)*. You are right. An ear-deafening noise arises, made by the repeated flappings of the ears of the sea-monsters as they emerge, and causing the interiors

of all the mountain caves to re-echo. Here comes the tide, white with the innumerable shells which it tosses on its waves.

MITRAVASU. It is indeed come. See ! this ocean tide is brilliant with its many-colored gems, and has its waters scented by the ejections of the sea-monsters, who have fed on the young shoots of the clove-trees.

JIMUTAVAHANA. O Mitravasu ! see again. These slopes of Malaya have all the splendor of the peaks of the snow mountains, by reason of the veils of white autumnal clouds.

MITRAVASU. These are not the slopes of Malaya. These are the heaps of the bones of Nagas.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*sorrowfully*). Ah ! why were they thus slain by wholesale ?

MITRAVASU. They were not slain by wholesale. Just listen to this : At this place Garuda, the king of birds, was in the habit of devouring one snake daily, catching it up from hell, whilst the whole contents of the ocean were cleft asunder from top to bottom by the wind of his wings.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*in a mournful tone*). Ah ! his deed was most cruel. And then ?

MITRAVASU. Then Garuda was addressed by Vasuki, king of Nagas, lord of hell, who feared annihilation of the whole serpent race—

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with respect*). Did he say, "Eat me first" ?

MITRAVASU. No, no.

JIMUTAVAHANA. What then ?

MITRAVASU. This is what he said : "Through fear of your furious descent, the embryos of the snakes are prematurely born by thousands, and the young ones perish ; so that our continuous line of descent is cut off, and your own interests are destroyed. Therefore that snake for the sake of which you make your descent into hell, I will send to you daily to this place."

JIMUTAVAHANA. How well were the snakes defended by their king ! Amidst his thousand double tongues was there not one with which he could say, "Myself is given by me this day to save the life of a snake."

MITRAVASU. This, then, was agreed by the king of birds. So, these conditions being thus settled by the king of the Nagas,



these are the heaps, white as the snow peaks, from the bones of the snakes, which the king of birds devours, and which have been increasing, do increase, and will increase as days go by.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Wonderful ! Fools commit sin even for the sake of a worthless body, which soon perishes, is ungrateful, and is a store-house of all uncleanness. Well, this destruction of the Nagas will assuredly bring some judgment. (*To himself.*) Would that, by giving up my own body, I might save the life of a single Naga ! (*Then enters the Doorkeeper.*)

DOORKEEPER. I have ascended the mountain peak and will now seek Mitravasus. (*Walking about.*) Here stands Mitravasus with the bridegroom. (*Going up.*) May the princes be victorious !

MITRAVASUS. O Sunanda, why are you come ? (*Doorkeeper whispers in his ear.*) O prince, my father has sent for me.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Go, then,

MITRAVASUS. The prince should not stay too long in this ill-omened region. (*Exit.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. I will descend from this mountain peak and look at the sea-shore. (*Walks about.*)

VOICE (*behind the scenes*). Alas ! my darling son, Sankhachuda, how can I endure to see thee slain today ?

JIMUTAVAHANA (*after hearing this*). Ha ! a cry of distress as if from a woman ! who can it be ? of what is she afraid ? I will try to know. (*He walks about. Then enters Sankhachuda, followed by an Old Woman, crying, and a Servant with a pair of garments for one completely veiled.*)

OLD WOMAN (*with tears*). Alas ! my son, Sankhachuda, how can I endure to see you slain this day ? (*Taking hold of his chin.*) Deprived of this moonface, Hades will become mid-night

SANKHACHUDA. O mother, why do you harass me yet more by weeping ?

OLD WOMAN (*looking at him and stroking his limbs*). Alas ! my son ! how will pitiless Garuda devour thy beauteous body, that has never felt the sun's rays ? (*Embracing him, she weeps.*)

SANKHACHUDA. Enough of lamentation. See here—since mortality as the nurse first clasps the new-born child to its

bosom, and the mother comes only second—what room is there for sorrow ? (*Wishes to depart.*)

OLD WOMAN. O son, stay for a moment whilst I look on your face.

SERVANT. Come, Prince Sankhachuda, never mind her words. Infatuated by affection for her son, she forgets the duty to our king.

SANKHACHUDA. I am coming.

SERVANT (*to himself, looking in advance*). I have brought him to the rock of execution ; so I will now give him the distinguishing badge of one condemned to death.

JIMUTAVAHANA. This must be the woman that I heard—(*looking at Sankhachuda*)—and this must be her son. Why, then, does she weep ? (*Looks on all sides.*) I do not perceive the very least cause for her fear. I will go near and see whence her fear is. Their conversation relates to it ; perhaps from it I may get some explanation. I will get inside a bush and listen.

SERVANT (*with tears, putting his hands together*). O Prince Sankhachuda, since it is the command of my lord, this so cruel message must be delivered.

SANKHACHUDA. Say on.

SERVANT. The king of the Nagas orders—

SANKHACHUDA (*putting his hands together to his head, respectfully*). What does our lord order ?

SERVANT. "Having put on this pair of red garments, mount upon the rock of execution that Garuda, on seeing the red garments, may eat you."

JIMUTAVAHANA (*having overheard*). How ! Is he, then, abandoned by Vasuki ?

SERVANT. O prince, take then this pair of garments. (*presents them.*)

SANKHACHUDA (*respectfully*). Give them to me. (*Takes them*). The mandate of our lord is on my head.

OLD WOMAN (*having seen the clothes in the hand of her son, striking her breast*). Alas ! my child, this seems like a flash of lightning. (*Faints*).

SERVANT. The time for Garuda's approach is close at hand. I will be off. (*Exit*).

SANKHACHUDA. O mother, recover thyself.

OLD WOMAN (*coming to herself, tearfully*). Alas ! my son, Alas ! thou obtained by a hundred vows ! Where shall I again behold thee ? (*She clasps him round the neck*).

JIMUTAVAHANA. Ah ! the pitiless Garuda. I should think that the heart of the lord of birds must be made of very adamant, if, casting away all pity, he can eat this child in his mother's lap, while she, distracted, utters vain complaints, with tears streaming from her eyes, and, glancing in all directions, pitifully repeats—"My child, who will deliver thee?"

SANKHACHUDA (*checking his own tears*). O mother, where is the use of excessive grief ? Do I not keep saying, "Cheer up," "Cheer up ?"

OLD WOMAN (*with tears*). How can I cheer up, seeing that thou, my son, my only son, art banished by the compassionate king of the Nagas ! Alas ! why in the universal world was my son thought of ? I am utterly unfortunate. (*She faints*).

JIMUTAVAHANA (*dolefully*). If I do not protect this wretched one, who is at the very point of death, abandoned by his relations, then what good is there in my body ? So I will go up to them.

SANKHACHUDA. O mother, be comforted.

OLD WOMAN. Ah ! my son, when you are given up by Vasuki, the protector of the Naga-world, who else will be your protector ?

JIMUTAVAHANA (*going up*). Shall not I ?

OLD WOMAN (*on seeing him, having hid her son with her upper garment, goes up to him and falls upon her knees*). O son of Vinata, destroy me. I am prepared for thy food by the Naga king.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with tears*). Ah ! the love of offspring ! I should think that after seeing this sorrow of hers, arising from affection for her son, even the enemy of the Nagas, whose heart is pitiless, will feel pity.

SANKHACHUDA. O mother, away with your fear, this is not the enemy of the Nagas. See the difference between this holy one, whose appearance indicates a beauteous nature, and Garuda, with his fierce beak smeared with clots of blood, which have dropped whilst he was piercing the brains of the mighty Nagas.

OLD WOMAN. In truth, through fear of thy death, I regard this whole world as Garuda.

JIMUTAVAHANA. O mother, what need of saying it again and again? Will not I accomplish his deliverance?

OLD WOMAN (*clasping her hands on her head*). My son, live long!

JIMUTAVAHANA. Mother, give me this distinguishing badge of a condemned one. I will put it on and offer to the son of Vinata my own body as food, to save the life of thy son.

OLD WOMAN (*stopping her ears*). God forbid! Thou also art a son equally with Sankhachuda, or even more so than he, since thou wishest to preserve my son by giving up thy own body, even though he is deserted by his own kinsfolk.

SANKHACHUDA. How different from the world in general is the mind of this magnanimous one! For this good man, moved by pity, gives up for the sake of another as though it were but a straw that life for the sake of which in olden times Visvamitra ate dog's flesh, like a dog-cooker; and and Nadijangha was slain by Gautama, even though he had done a kindness to him; and this Garuda, son of Kasyapa, daily eats Nagas. (*Addressing the hero.*) O magnanimous one, unfeigned compassion for me has been fully shown by thee in the determination to give up thyself; but do not obstinately insist on it. Lowborn people like me are born and die; but whence are those produced like thee, who gird up their loins for the sake of others? What, then, is the use of this fixed determination? Let this resolution be abandoned.

JIMUTAVAHANA. O Sankhachuda, do not put any obstacle in the way of this desire of mine of giving up myself for the sake of another, which only now has got an opportunity of accomplishment, after so long a time. Do not, then, hesitate, but give me the distinctive badge of those appointed to be slain.

SANKHACHUDA. O magnanimous one, where is the use of this fruitless perseverance? Never will Sankhachuda sully the family honor of Sankhapala, which is white as a shell. If we are indeed objects worthy of thy pity, then let some expedient be devised, so that this woman may not quit life, overcome by my calamity.

**JIMUTAVAHANA.** What can possibly be devised ? She who dies in your death and lives only in your life,—if you wish her to live, save yourself by my life. This is the only remedy, so give me quickly the badge of death, that, having disguised myself in it, I may mount the execution rock. And do you, thinking of your mother before all, retire from your post. Probably your mother, if she stood in view of the place of execution, would abandon life. Do you not see the great cemetery, filled with many skeletons of the ill-fated Nagas ? See here, rows upon rows of the crests of the slain Nagas, coated thick with oozing brains, splash as they fall from the jaws of the jackals into the stream of carrion-smelling gore, while the scene is shrouded in awful darkness by the flapping wings of the vultures, their greed increased by the gobbets of raw flesh which fall mangled from their chattering beaks ?

**SANKHACHUDA.** How should I not see ? This cemetery, which affords delight to Garuda, with a snake for his daily food, is like the body of Siva, with its skulls and bones white as the moon.

**JIMUTAVAHANA.** O Sankhachuda, go then. What is the use of these well-meant objections ?

**SANKHACHUDA.** The time for the approach of Garuda is close at hand. (*Goes on his knees before his mother.*) O mother, do you now go away. In whatever state we may be born again, mayst thou alone be my mother, O doting one ! (*falls at her feet.*)

**OLD WOMAN** (*with tears*). How ! Is this the very last speech ? O son, my feet assuredly will not bear me from thee, therefore I will stay here.

**SANKHACHUDA** (*rising*). After I have quickly walked round the southern shrine of Gokarna, which is close at hand, I will carry out the command of my lord. (*Exeunt both*).

**JIMUTAVAHANA** (*having seen some one coming, joyfully, to himself*). Good luck ! I have got what I wanted, through the unexpected acquisition of this pair of red garments.

**CHAMBERLAIN** (*entering*). This pair of garments is sent by the queen, the mother of Mitravasu, to the prince. Let, then, the prince put them on.

**JIMUTAVAHANA** (*with respect*). Give them to me. (*Chamberlain*

*gives them,—to himself*). My marriage with Malayavati has borne good fruit. (*Aloud.*) You may depart. Let the Queen be saluted from me.

CHAMBERLAIN. Whatever your highness orders. (*Exit*).

JIMUTAVAHANA. The seasonable arrival of this pair of red garments gives me the greatest pleasure, inasmuch as I desire to give myself up for another. (*Looking in all directions.*) From the violence of this wind, which shakes the mighty rocks of the Malayan peaks, I suspect that the king of birds is now close at hand. See, the expanse of his wings obscures the sky, like the clouds at Doomsday; the wind caused by his rush casts the waters of ocean on the shore, as if for another deluge; and,—raising an apprehension of the sudden ending of the world, and watched with terror by the elephants that support the earth,—with the refulgence of his body, which shines like the twelve suns, he spreads a lurid red gleam over the ten quarters of the sky. Therefore now, while Sankhachuda is away, I will quickly mount the execution rock. (*Does so and sits down, starting as if enraptured.*) Oh, the rapture of its touch! Not so much does Malayavati delight me, moist with sandal-juice of Malaya, as this rock of execution, which I embrace to the furtherance of my desired object. Or rather—what need of mentioning Malayavati? Not such joy is attained by one in childhood, lying peacefully in his mother's lap, as by me on the slope of this rock of execution. Here comes Garuda. I must veil myself. (*Does so Then enters Garuda.*)

GARUDA. Here I am, in a moment arrived on the shore side of the Malayan Mount, greedy to devour the Naga. When I saw the moon's disk, I was reminded of the form of Sesa coiled up in a circle through fear. My elder brother joyfully recognized me, when the sun was haken by the sudden start of his chariot steeds as I passed. My long wings, as I fly, stretch out still longer by reason of the clouds, that hang from them in festoons.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with joy*). Through merit that I gain today, by protecting a Naga at the sacrifice of myself, may I still obtain, in succeeding existences, a body to be sacrificed for others!

GARUDA (*looking at the hero*). Speedily will I catch up and

eat this Naga, dressed in red garments, who looks as if besmeared with blood, which gushes from his heart that has burst through fear of me. I will first split open with my beak, which is fiercer than the fierceness of a thunderbolt, the breast of this one, who has fallen on the surface of the execution rock, to save the rest of Nagas. (*Making a descent, he seizes the hero. Behind the scenes flowers shower down, and drums sound. Garuda is astonished.*) Why does this shower of flowers fall, rejoicing the bees with their fragrance? Or why does this noise of drums cause the quarters of the sky to re-echo? (*Smiling.*) Ah! I know what it is. I conjecture that even the tree of Paradise itself is shaken by the wind of my speed; and that the clouds of doomsday give forth their growl, anticipating the world's immediate annihilation.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*to himself*) Good luck! I have attained my desire.

GARUDA (*seizing the hero*). Although this protector of the Snakes seems to me more like a human being, still verily he shall satiate today my hunger for snake-flesh. So I will take him and ascend the Malayan mountain, there to eat him at my pleasure. (*Exeunt omnes.*)

## ACT FIVE.

(*A Doorkeeper enters.*)

DOORKEEPER. Through affection, one fears danger to a beloved object, even if he be only gone into the garden of his own house; how much more, when placed in the midst of an awful forest, whose mighty dangers are well known. The mighty king Visvavasu sits in sorrow, saying to himself "Jimutavahana who is gone to see the ocean's shore, stops a long time;" and he has given me these orders—"Since, O Sunanda! I have heard that my son-in-law, Jimutavahana, has gone to the district rendered terrible by the proximity of Garuda, I am fearful for him. Go, then, and ascertain quickly whether he has returned to his own house

or not." So I am now going there. (*Walking about, and looking before him.*) Here is the royal sage, Jimutaketu, Jimutavahana's father, standing in the compound of his hut, respectfully attended by his wife and the king's daughter. See! Jimutaketu has a splendor like the ocean, wearing as he does two linen garments, with ripples tremulous as waves and white as the ocean's foam, and adorned by his queen, as the ocean is by the Ganges, each alike possessed of great holiness, and abundant in maternal streams; and at their side shines Malayavati, like the ocean's shore. I will go up to them. (*Then enters King Jimutaketu, with his wife and daughter-in-law.*)

KING. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of youth, and held sway in a kingdom full of glory; I have steadily exercised devotion; my son is of great renown, and my daughter-in-law here is of fitting parentage, now that all my desires are fulfilled, should I not contemplate death?

DOORKEEPER (*coming up suddenly*).—Of Jimutavahana—

KING (*stopping his ears*). Cease! An ill-omen!

QUEEN. May this ill-omen be averted!

MALAYAVATI. This bad omen causes my heart to palpitate.

KING (*starting as though he felt a throbbing of the left eye*). Good sir, what of Jimutavahana?

DOORKEEPER. I am sent to you by king Visvavasu to learn tidings of Jimutavahana.

KING. Is not my child there with him?

QUEEN (*sorrowfully*). O king! if he is not there, where can my boy be gone?

KING. Assuredly, he will be gone somewhere for our benefit.

MALAYAVATI (*with grief, to herself*). I dread something very different from my husband's absence.

DOORKEEPER. Give your orders. What message am I to take my lord?

KING (*starting as though he felt a throbbing of the left eye*). I am perfectly bewildered in my mind with the thought that Jimutavahana delays so long. Why do you keep throbbing. O left eye, again and again, indicating some evil is about to happen? Base that you are, yonder sun shall stop your throbbings. (*Looking up.*) Yonder bright thousand-rayed one, sole eye of the three worlds, shall soon bring to light



the happiness of Jimutavahana. (*Looking astonished.*) What is this that has suddenly fallen in front of me from the sky ? as it were a star, loosened by a portentous wind, shooting forth red streaks, bright as rays, and giving excessive pain to the eye of the beholder. How is this ? It has fallen at my very feet. (*All look at it.*) Alas ! it is a crest-jewel, with moist flesh adhering to it ! Whose can it be ?

QUEEN. (*in a tone of distress*). O king ! it is the crest-jewel of my poor boy.

MALAYAVATI. O mother ! say not so.

DOORKEEPER. O king ! do not distress yourself through ignorance of the facts. In this place many crest-jewels of the chiefs of the Nagas, who are devoured by Garuda, fall torn off by his beak and claws.

KING. O Queen ! there is some reason in what he says. I hope that it may prove so !

QUEEN. O Sunanda ! assuredly by this time my son will have arrived at his father-in-law's house from that shore. Go, then, and ascertain for us quickly.

DOORKEEPER. As the queen orders. (*Exit*)

KING. O queen ! would that it might prove to be the crest of a Naga.

(*Then enters Sankhachuda, clad in red garments.*)

SANKHACHUDA (*shedding tears*). After hastily paying my respects at the shrine of Gokarna, on the ocean's shore, I am again come to this slaughter-house of the Nagas. But Garuda has taken that Vidyadhara, after tearing open his breast with his beak and claws, and is flown up towards heaven. (*Sobbing.*) Alas ! Thou excessively magnanimous and affectionate one ! Alas ! My only true friend, though indeed thou hadst no cause to be so ! Alas ! Thou that sufferest for another's sake, whither art thou gone ? Give me an answer. Alas ! Base Sankhachuda, thou art utterly undone, since thou hast not obtained the merit of saving the Nagas, even for one day, nor even the praiseworthiness arising from obedience to thy lord's commands. Thou art to be pitied, since thou hast been saved at the expense of another, who gave up his life for thine, Woe ! Woe ! How hast thou been deceived ! This being the state of things, I will not live to be made a laughingstock, but will at once endeavor to

follow him. (*Walking about, and looking intently on the ground.*) I proceed, full of desire to see Garuda, tracing carefully this line of blood, which, through its purple hue, is hard to be traced on this rock, which is variegated with minerals, and made obscure by the thick trees. At first the track is broad, as if from the sudden gush, and then the drops become clotted, and at wider intervals; next a few drops are seen, scattered among the stones in a broken line and then they are full of insects on the level ground.

QUEEN (*with alarm*). O king! this man, coming here hastily, with his face flushed, appears troubled, and fills my heart with alarm. Let us ascertain who he is.

KING. As the queen says. (*Listening; with joy, and smiling.*)

O queen! cease from sorrow. Assuredly this crest-jewel must be his, let fall on this spot by some bird, who snatched it from his head, thinking from its color that it was a piece of flesh.

QUEEN (*joyfully, embracing Malayavati*). O thou saved from widowhood, be calm. Such a form as this was not made to suffer the pains of widowhood.

MALAYAVATI (*with joy*). O mother! it must be then through the efficacy of thy blessing. (*falls at her feet.*)

KING (*to Shankhachuda*). My child, what is the matter?

SANKHACHUDA. My throat being obstructed with tears through the excess of my grief, I am totally unable to tell you.

KING. My son, tell me thy sorrow, that it may become more endurable from participation. At present it is intolerable, while shut up in thine own heart.

SHANKHACHUDA. Hear it, then. I am a Naga, Sankhachuda by name. I was sent by Vasuki, as a meal for Garuda. But why waste time in words? Even as we talk, perhaps these tracks of blood mingled with dust are disappearing. I will therefore tell it in a breath. By a certain Vidyadhara, whose mind was full of compassion, my life has been preserved. He has given himself up to Garuda.

KING. Who else would thus undergo calamity for another? My child, you might as well have said at once, "By Jimutavahana!" Alas! I am undone, ill-fated man that I am.

QUEEN. Alas! my child, how could you do this?

MALAYAVATI. How true has my foreboding proved ! (*They all faint.*)

SANKHACHUDA (*with tears*). Surely these must be the parents of that magnanimous one, otherwise they would not be brought into this condition by my evil tidings. But what else could issue from the mouth of a venomous serpent, except poison ? Assuredly, Sankhachuda has worthily repaid his benefactor ! In what way, now, shall I put an end to myself ? But I must first revive these two. Revive, my father ! Cheer up, O mother ! (*They both revive.*)

QUEEN. Stand up, my child. Do not weep. Shall we live without Jimutavahana ? Cheer up, then.

MALAYAVATI (*recovering*). O husband, where shall I see you again ?

KING. Alas ! O my child, who knew so well how to perform the duty of honoring thy father's feet, even in another world the practice of good behavior is not forgotten by thee, since thou hast dropped thy crest-jewel at my feet. (*Takes up the crest-jewel.*) Ah ! my child, is it only in this way that I can now behold thee ? (*Puts it to his breast.*) Alas ! Alas ! O thou, whose head was continually bowed at my feet in constant devotion, thy crest-jewel, polished by their contact as by a touchstone, was never guilty of injuring any one ; why, then, does it now rudely pierce my breast ?

QUEEN. Ah ! my son Jimutavahana, whose only pleasure was in obedience to thy father, how couldst thou leave him, and go to enjoy the delights of heaven ?

KING (*with tears*). O queen ! can we live without Jimutavahana, that you talk thus ?

MALAYAVATI (*falling at his feet, and clasping her hands.*) Give me the crest-jewel, as a memorial of my husband, that, wearing it in my bosom, I may mount the funeral pile, and quench my burning sorrows in the fire.

KING. O devoted one ! why do you thus trouble me ? Is not this the fixed determination of us all ?

QUEEN. O king, why do we then delay ?

KING. There is no reason. But one, who has always maintained a sacred fire, obtains purification from no other. Therefore, we will fetch fire from the sacred fire-cell, and burn ourselves.

SANKHACHUDA (*to himself*). Alas ! for the sake of me, a single

individual, this whole family of Vidyadharas is utterly destroyed. I will see what can be done. (*Aloud*) O father, not without due deliberation should such a rash purpose be carried out. The sportings of destiny demand thought. Perhaps, when he finds that he is not a Naga, the enemy of the Nagas will let him go again. Let us then follow Garuda in this direction.

QUEEN. It will assuredly be by the special favor of the gods if we look on the face of our son, yet living.

MALAYAVATI (*to herself*). Most assuredly I, ill-fated that I am, can hardly look for such a blessing.

KING. O child, may this speech of thine prove true! Still it is fitting that we should take the fires with us, as we follow. Do you, then, follow the track; and we will come as soon as we have brought the fire from the fire-cell. (*Exit, with wife and daughter-in-law.*)

SANKHACHUDA. I will now follow Garuda. (*Looking in front.*) Yonder, afar off, I see the enemy of the Nagas, on a pinnacle of Malaya, making new gulleys in the mountain-side, as he rubs his gory beak. The woods around are all uprooted and burnt by the streaks of flaming fire from his eyes, and the ground is hollowed round him by his dreadful adamantine claws. (*Garuda enters, seated on a rock, with the hero lying in front of him.*)

GARUDA. Never since my birth has so wonderful a thing been seen by me in my feasts on the lords of the Nagas! Not only is the hero unterrified, but he even appears almost delighted. There is no lassitude seen in him, though most of his blood is drunk up. His face, through its heroic endurance, even when he is suffering the pangs from the tearing of his flesh, seems serene as in ecstasy. Every limb which is not actually destroyed bristles with rapture. His glance falls on me, whilst doing him an injury, as though I were doing him a favor. Hence, by his heroism, my curiosity is excited. I will not eat him. I will ask who he is.

JIMUTAVAHANA. There is yet flesh in my body, whose blood pours forth from every vein; and you, magnanimous one, do not seem satiated. Why, then, O Garuda, do you stop eating?

GARUDA (*to himself*). Wonder of wonders! How! Even in

this state does he still speak so stoutly ! (*Aloud.*) This heroism of thine seems to call back the heart's blood that has been poured out by my beak. I wish, then, to hear who thou art.

JIMUTAVĀHANA. It is not fit that you should hear, while tormented by hunger. Satisfy yourself, then, with my flesh and blood.

SANKHACHUDA (*coming up in haste*). O Garuda, not indeed, not indeed should this cruelty be done. This is no Naga. Let him go. Eat me. I am sent by Vasuki for thy food. (*presents his breast.*)

JIMUTAVĀHANA (*on seeing Sankhachuda*). Alas ! my desire has become fruitless through the arrival of Sankhachuda.

GARUDA (*looking at them both*). Both of you wear the distinctive badge of victims. Which is really the Naga I know not.

SANKHACHUDA. The error is a likely one indeed ! Not to mention the mark of the swastika on the breast, are there 'not scales on my body ? Do you not count my two tongues as I speak ? Nor see these three hoods of mine, the compressed wind hissing through them in my insupportable anguish, while the brightness, of my gems is distorted by the thick smoke from the fire of my direful poison ?

GARUDA (*looking at both, and noticing the hood of Sankhachuda*). Who, then, is that I have destroyed ?

SANKHACHUDA. It is Jimutavahana, the ornament of the race of Vidyadharas. How was this done by thee, O merciless one ?

GARUDA (*to himself*). Ah ! How, indeed, was it done ? This, then, is that Jimutavahana, prince of the Vidyadharas, whose fame I have repeatedly heard sung by the hosts of bards who traverse Lokaloka, sung on the slopes of Meru, in the caves of Mandara, on the tableland of Himavat, on the mount Mahendra, on the peaks of Kailasa, even on these heights of Malaya, and in the various caverns of the mountains that bound the world. Of a truth, I am plunged in a vast quagmire of iniquity !

JIMUTAVĀHANA. O lord of snakes, why art thou thus troubled ?

SANKHACHUDA. Is it not time for excessive trouble ? If my body were preserved from Garuda by the sacrifice of thine, verily it were right that thou shouldst hurl me to a depth lower than the deepest hell.

GARUDA. Alas ! ala ! His own body has been of his own accord presented for my food by this noble-minded one, through pity, to save the life of a Naga, who had fallen within the reach of my voracity. What a terrible sin then have I committed ! In a word, this is a "Bodhisattwa", whom I have slain. I see no way of expiating my sin, except by entering the fire. Where then shall I find fire ? (*Looking around.*) Ah ! Here come some with fire. I will wait till they arrive.

SANKHACHUDA. O prince, your parents are come.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*with agitation*). O Sankhachuda, do you sit down, and conceal my body with my upper garment. Otherwise, perhaps, my mother might die, if she suddenly saw me in this state. (*Sankhachuda takes up the garment fallen at his side, and does so. Then enters King Jimutaketu, with his wife and daughter-in-law.*)

KING (*sorrowfully*). Alas ! son Jimutavahana, whence came this exalted degree of compassion—"Another is as one's self ?" How was it that the thought did not occur to you—"Are many to be saved, or one?" For, by giving up your life to save a Naga from Garuda, yourself, your parents, your wife, yea the whole family is destroyed.

QUEEN (*addressing Malayavati*). O daughter, desist. You will extinguish the fire with your incessant tears. (*All walk round.*)

KING. Alas ! my son Jimutavahana !

GARUDA (*on hearing this*). He says "Alas ! my son Jimutavahana !" This then is doubtless his father. How can I burn myself in this fire ? I am ashamed to appear before them after slaying their son. Yet why should I be troubled about a fire ? Am not I on the ocean's brink ? I will cast myself into the submarine fire, terrible as the destined consumer of the world at the end of an æon, having kindled it by the wind of my own wings, fiercer than any supernatural blast, which will make the flames flicker like the the tips of the tongue of Death, when enjoying the relish of licking up the three worlds, and which span the sea, and reach even to threaten the sun's domain. (*He wishes to rise.*)

JIMUTAVAHANA. O king of birds, away with this resolve ! This would be no expiation for your sin.

GARUDA (*falling on his knees, and putting his hands together*).

O magnanimous one, tell me then what expiation is there ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. Wait a moment. My parents are come. I will first pay my respects to them.

GARUDA. "Do so.

KING (*with joy, having seen him*). O queen, fortune favors you!

Here is our son Jimutavahana, not only alive, but respectfully waited on by Garuda, with his hands folded like a disciple.

QUEEN. O mighty king, my desires are all accomplished. I shall see his face, and surely his body must be uninjured.

MALAYAVATI. Even though I see my husband, I cannot believe it. It is too dear to be true !

KING (*going up*). Come, my child, embrace me. (*Jimutavahana wishing to rise, the garment falls off, and he faints.*)

SANKHACHUDA. O prince, revive, revive !

KING. Alas ! my child, having seen me, are you gone without an embrace ?

QUEEN. Alas ! my child, do you not greet me with a single word ?

MALAYAVATI. Alas ! my husband, are not even your parents worthy of a glance ? (*They all faint.*)

SANKHACHUDA (*to himself*). O villain Sankhachuda, why did you not perish, whilst yet unborn ? Seeing that moment by moment you endure pangs worse than death itself ?

GARUDA. All this is caused by my inconsiderate action. Base wretch that I am ! But I will do what I can. (*Fanning with his wings.*) O noble one, revive, revive !

JIMUTAVAHANA (*recovering*). O Sankhachuda, revive my parents.

SANKHACHUDA. O father, recover ! O mother, revive ! (*Both come to their senses.*)

QUEEN. O son, does that villain Death carry you off in our very sight ?

KING. O queen, speak not so inauspiciously. The long-lived one yet breathes. See to his wife.

QUEEN (*weeping, having covered her face with her dress*). The omen be averted ! I will not weep. O Malayavati, revive. Rise, my child, rise. At this time, if ever, look on the face of thy husband.

MALAYAVATI (*coming to herself*). Alas ! my husband !

QUEEN (*stopping the mouth of Malayavati*). O child, act not thus. May this omen be averted.

KING (*to himself, with tears*). Why do I not burst into a hundred pieces through sorrow, as I behold my son giving up his life, which, the rest of his body being destroyed, has retreated to his throat as to its last remaining stronghold ?

MALAYAVATI. Alas ! my husband ! I must indeed be very wicked, since even when I see my husband in such a state, I yet live on !

QUEEN (*stroking the limbs of the hero, and addressing Garuda*). O thou who fearest naught, how could this body of my son, in the fresh bloom of youth, be brought by thee to such a state as this ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. O mother, not so indeed. What harm has been done by him ? Was it not in reality just the same before ? See ! What beauty can there be in a body, loathsome to the sight, and consisting of blood, marrow, flesh, bones, and fat, covered in by skin ?

GARUDA. O noble-minded one, I stand in pain, regarding myself as already consumed by the fiery flames of hell. Point out, then, I pray, how I can be cleansed from my guilt.

JIMUTAVAHANA. If my father gives me leave, I will point out the expiation for this fault.

KING. Do so, my child.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Listen, then, Garuda.

GARUDA (*putting his hands together*). Give your instructions.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Cease for ever from destroying life; repent thy former deeds; labor to gather together an unbroken chain of good actions, by inspiring confidence in all living beings ; so that this sin, which has its origin in the destruction of living beings, may not ripen to bear fruit, but may be all absorbed in thy merits, as a morsel of salt thrown into the depths of yonder ocean.

GARUDA. Whatever you order. I, who was lying in a sleep of ignorance, now, awakened by you, have from this day ceased from destroying living beings. Now let the race of Nagas wander happily in the mighty ocean—at times stretching from shore to shore like bridges, at times taken for whirlpools, through the coiling of their bodies—and at



times resembling continents, from the multitude of their hoods, large as alluvial islands. Again, let the damsels of the Nagas in yon grove of sandal trees celebrate joyfully this glory of thine, thinking lightly of the fatigue, though their bodies faint with the exertion, and though their cheeks, browned by the touch of the rays of the early sun, seem as if bedaubed with red lead, while their hair let fall to their feet resembles the darkness of clouds.

JIMUTAVAHANA. Well said, O magnanimous one! We are delighted. By all means keep firm to your purpose. (*Addressing Sankhachuda.*) O Sankhachuda, do you now go home. (*Sankhachuda sighing, stands with downcast looks. Jimutavahana sighs as he looks at his mother.*) For assuredly thy mother will be sitting full of grief for thy pain, as she looks up, expecting to see thee drop, mangled by Garuda's beak.

QUEEN (*with tears*). Blessed indeed is that mother, who will behold the face of her son, with his body uninjured, though he was actually in the very jaws of Garuda.

SANKHACHUDA. O mother, it is indeed as you say. Would that the Prince might be saved!

JIMUTAVAHANA (*speaking as though in agony*). Ah! oh! these joint-racking pangs were not felt by me before, through the excess of pleasure, which I felt in doing good to another, but now they begin to hem me round. (*He sinks in a dying state.*)

KING (*with agitation*). Alas! my son, why this posture?

QUEEN. Alas! alas! Why does he talk thus? (*Beating her breast.*) Help! help! My child is dying!

MALAYAVATI. Ah! my husband, you appear in a hurry to leave us.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*trying to place his hands together*). O Sankhachuda! place my hands together.

SANKHACHUDA (*doing so*). Alas! the world is robbed of its Master.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*half opening his eyes, and looking at his father*). O father, O mother! This is my last salutation. These limbs retain no consciousness—my ears hear no sound, however distinct the articulation—alas! my eye is fast closing—my father, these vital airs are quickly leaving me

in my powerlessness—but, “Through the merit that I gain today by protect’ing a Naga at the sacrifice of myself, may I still obtain in succeeding existences a body to be sacrificed for others.” (*He falls*)

QUEEN. Ah, my son! Ah, my child! Ah, darling of thy parents! Where art thou? Tell me!

KING. Alas, child Jimutavahana! Alas, the darling of thy companions! Alas, thou possessed of all virtues, where art thou? Tell me! (*Throwing up his hands.*) Firmness has now no home. To whom can modesty go for protection? Who in the whole world now possesses patience? Liberality has ceased, and truth has verily perished! Where now can pity go, itself worthy of pity? The whole world has become void by thy departure to another, O my son!

MALAYAVATI. Alas, my husband! How could you leave me and depart? O Malayavati, how cruel you are! What do you not deserve for living so long after your husband?

SANKHACHUDA. O Prince, where art thou gone, forsaking these people, dearer to thee than life itself? Assuredly now Shankhachuda will follow thee.

GARUDA. Alas! This noble-minded one is dead. What shall I do now do?

QUEEN (*looking up with tears*). O revered guardians of the world, bring my son to life by sprinkling him in some way with ambrosia.

GARUDA (*joyfully to himself*). Ah! The mention of ambrosia reminds me opportunely. I think I may yet wipe out my disgrace. I will pray to Indrā, and persuade him by a shower of ambrosia to restore to life not only Jimutavahana, but all those lords of Nagas that have heretofore been eaten by me, and who are now merely skeletons. If he will not grant it, then,—having drunk up the ocean with my wings, and borne along by mighty winds of ever-increasing violence, while the twelve suns fall fainting, bewildered by the flaming fierceness of my eyes,—I will break to pieces with my beak the thunderbolt of Indra, the club of Kuvera, and the staff of Yama, the lord of the dead, and, having conquered the Gods in battle, will at once by my own might let fall an ambrosial shower. Here, then, I go. (*Exit, after walking round haughtily.*)

KING. O child, Sankhachuda, why do you still delay ? Collect wood, and build a funeral pile for my son, that we too may go with him.

QUEEN. O son, Sankhachuda, quickly get it ready. Thy brother remains in pain, without our company.

SANKHACHUDA (*tearfully*). Whatever my parents order. Am not I willing to lead the way ? (*Rises and builds a funeral pile.*) O father, O mother, here is the funeral pile prepared.

KING. O Queen, why do you still weep ? Rise, we will mount the pile. (*All stand up.*)

MALAYAVATI (*looking up with her hands together*). O revered Gauri, it was promised by thee—"An emperor of the Vidyadharas shall be thy husband." How, then, in my case, wretched one that I am, have thy words proved untrue ? (*Then enters Guari, as in haste.*)

GAURI. O mighty King Jimutaketu, assuredly this rash act must not be done.

KING. Oh! How can the sight of Gauri be in vain ?

GAURI (*addressing Malayavati*). Child, how could I prove untrue ? (*Going up to the hero, and sprinkling him with water from a water-pot.*) I am well pleased with thee, who even at the cost of thy own life wouldst benefit the world. Live, Jimutavahana ! (*The hero stands up.*)

KING (*joyfully*). O Queen ! joy ! joy ! Our son is restored to life !

QUEEN. By the blessing of Gauri.

JIMUTAVAHANA (*having seen Gauri, putting his hands together*).

Ah ! how should the sight of Gauri be in vain ? O thou who grantest all desires, and removest all pain from thy prostrate worshippers, O protectress, I bow at thy feet,—O Guari, ever celebrated in song by the Vidyadharas ! (*He falls at the feet of Gauri. All look upwards.*)

KING. Ah ! what means this shower, when no clouds are seen ? O revered one, what is this ?

GAURI. O King Jimutaketu, this shower of ambrosia is caused to fall by the repentant lord of birds, to restore to life Jimutavahana, and these lords of the Nagas, now only skeletons. (*Pointing with a finger.*) Do you not see these lords of Nagas ? Now they reach Sankhachuda, their heads bright with the rays of their unveiled crest-jewels—now they lick

up the very ground in their haste to devour the ambrosia with their two-torked tongues—and now, hurrying along, they plunge into the ocean by tortuous paths, like the waters of the rivers of the Malaya hills. (*Addressing the hero.*) O child Jimutavahana, thou art worthy of something more than the mere gift of life, therefore this is my further blessing to thee—I on this very spot will make thee in a moment an universal emperor of the Vidyadharas, having sprinkled thee with purifying water produced ready at hand from my Manasa lake, only sullied by the dust of the golden lotuses, shaken by the pinions of the wild geese,—and placed in jewelled jars created by my will. Let the jewel of the golden wheel come first, then the elephant with the four white tusks, and the dark coloured horse, and next Malayavati. O emperor, behold these are the jewels which I give thee. Yet further,—behold these nobles of the Vidyadharas, bearing in their hands chowries of the yak's tail, white as the autumnal moon, making, as they walk, and bow, and bend their bodies low in devotion, very rainbows with the rays of their gems,—and among them the villain Matanga and his fellows. Tell me, now, what yet further boon I can grant thee ?

JIMUTAVAHANA. What boon can there be beyond this ? Sankhachuda is delivered from him who was the dread of all the snakes; Garuda has been brought to a better mind; all the lords of the Nagas, whom he had ever eaten, he has now restored to life; my parents are yet alive, through the recovery of my life; imperial dignity has been obtained; and thou, O goddess, hast been seen visibly present. What further boon can I ask of thee ? Yet, grant that these words of Bharata may come true :—May the clouds in due season let loose their showers, exhilarating the pea-fowl in their wild dance. May they clothe the earth with green harvests in a continual succession ! And may all my subjects, accumulating good works, and freed from all calamities, rejoice with minds untainted by envy, tasting unbroken pleasure in the society of relations and friends ! (*Exeunt omnes.*)